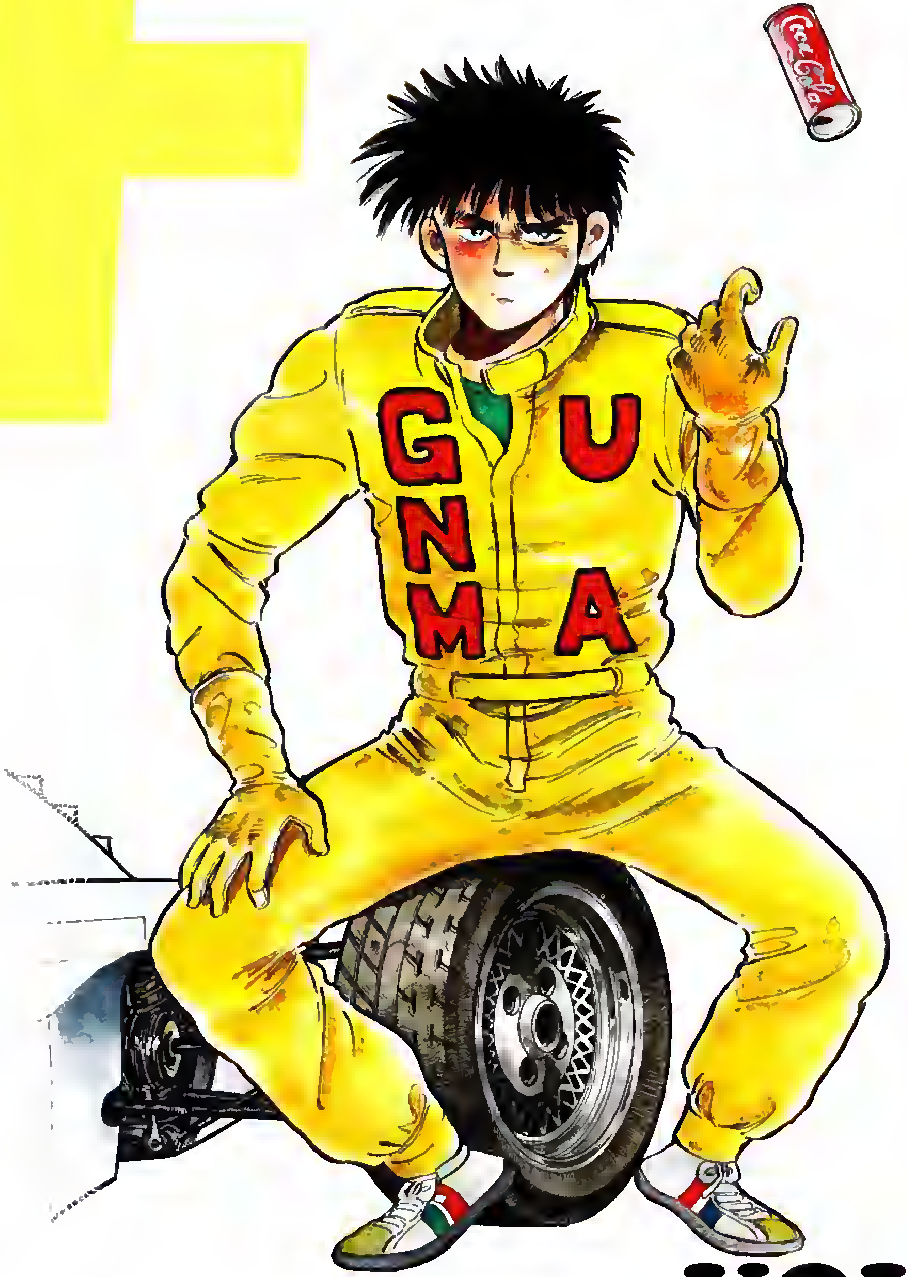
Vol.3

ROKUDA NOBORU

F
Vol.3

ROKUDA NOBORU



VOL.3

BATTLE ROYAL

F

Vol.3
BATTLE ROYAL

Chapter 1: The First Race
Chapter 2: Unexpected Trouble
Chapter 3: What Friends are For
Chapter 4: Decisions
Chapter 5: Expenses
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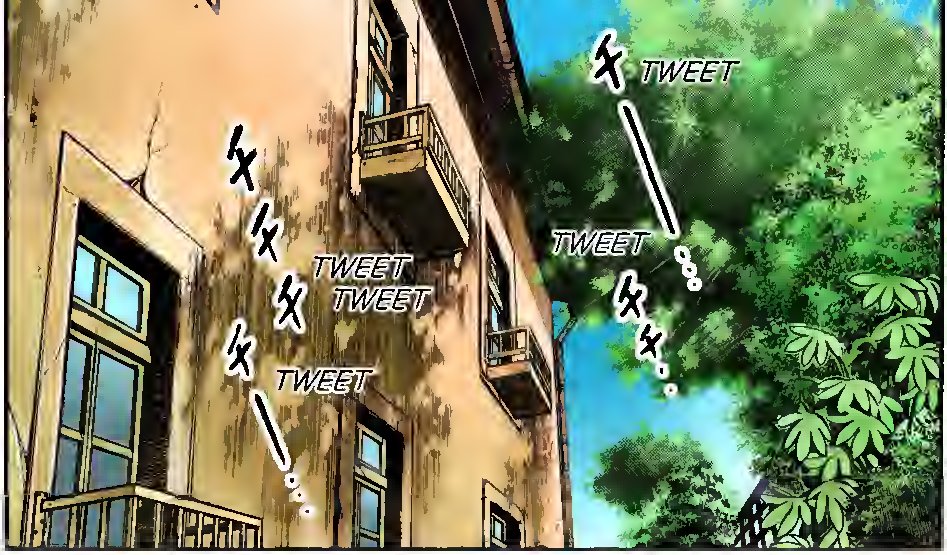
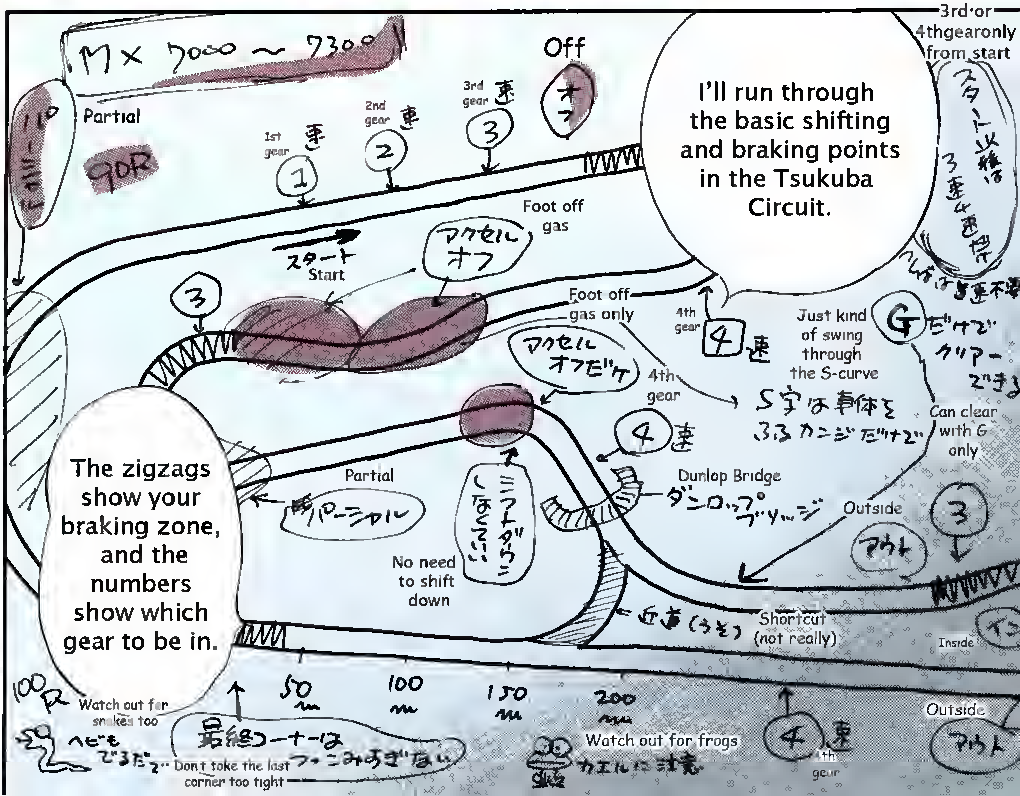
Chapter 9: Battle Royal
Chapter 10: The Final Lap

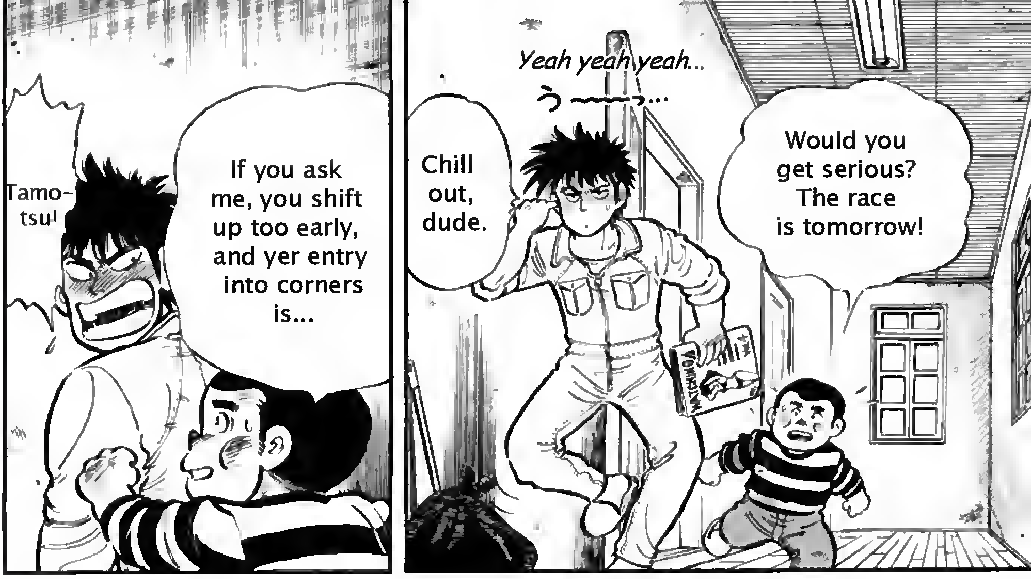
Chapter 1:
The First Race
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
MORIOKA RACING TEAM


TWEET
TWEET
TWEET
TWEET
TWEET

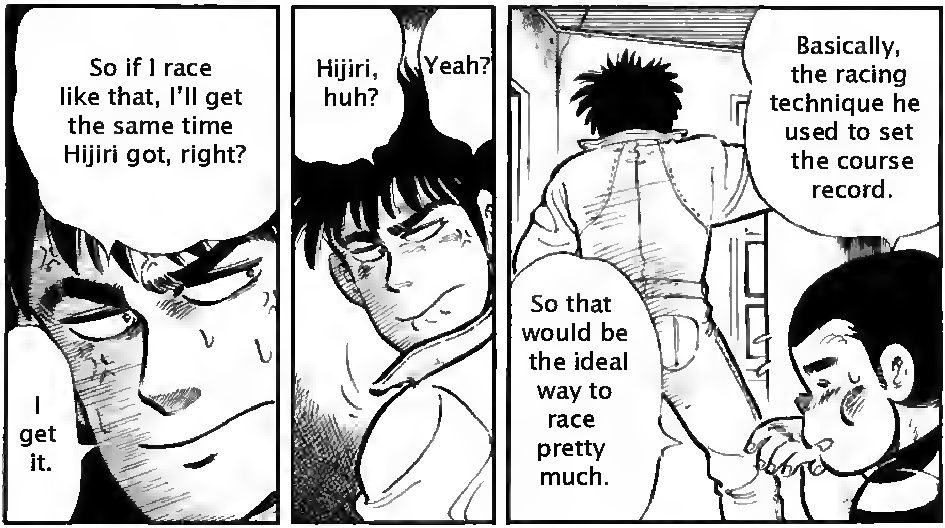
Let's go over this one more time, Gunma.


I'll run through the basic shifting and braking points in the Tsukuba Circuit.
The zigzags show your braking zone, and the numbers show which gear to be in.
3rd or 4th gear only from start
Off
Partial
1st gear
2nd gear
3rd gear
Foot off gas
Start
Foot off gas only
4th gear
Just kind of swing through the S-curve
Can clear with G only
Partial
No need to shift down
Dunlop Bridge
Outside
Shortcut (not really)
Inside
Watch out for snakes too
Don't take the last corner too tight
Watch out for frogs
50
100
150
200

In nine hours of practice runs yer best time was 1:02.57.
Pretty sure that time was among the top to qualify in October last year.
If you follow this chart I reckon you can get a constant time in the 1:02 range.
If all goes well, you oughta be able to rank in pretty good.
Last year, Hijiri set the course record at 1:01.47.
Gun-ma!
...
Yeah, like I said, you just gotta...
Ooh, now that's sweet!
Huh?

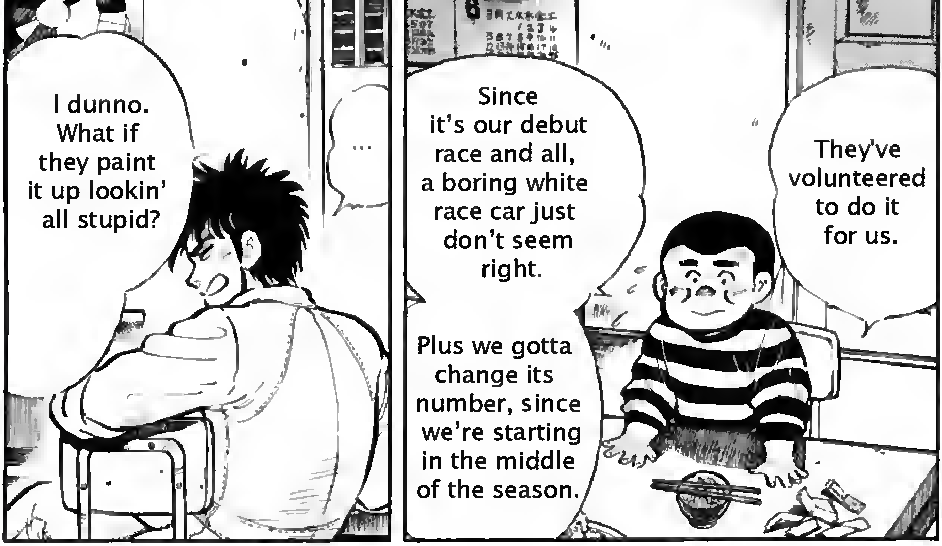

Tamo-tsu!
If you ask me, you shift up too early, and yer entry into corners is...
Yeah yeah yeah...
う～～～...
Chill out, dude.
Would you get serious? The race is tomorrow!

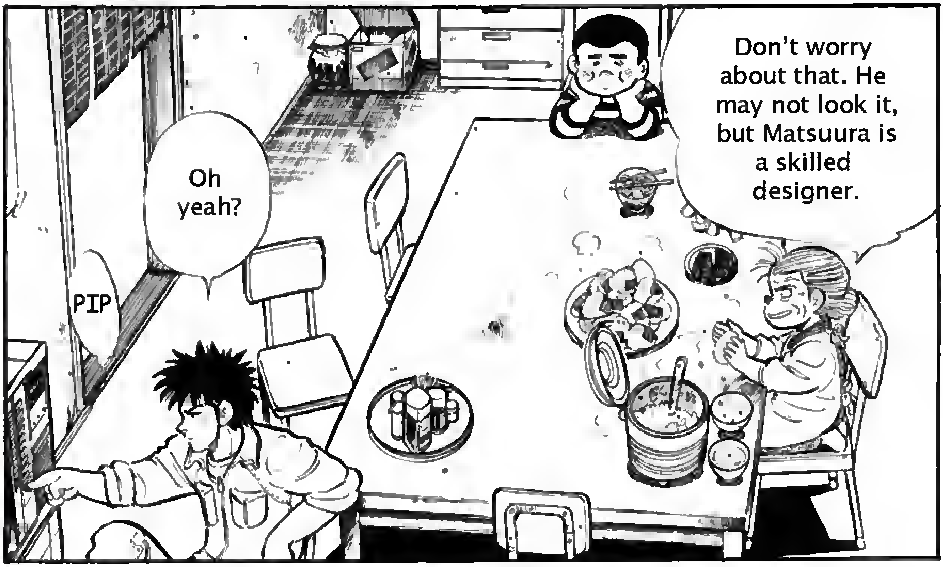
From Hijiri's race...
Well ...
Where'd you get these so-called basics anyway? From a "Racing for Dummies" book?
Yer a regular back seat driver! You ain't even raced a minute in yer life!
つんつん
POKE
POKE


So if I race like that, I'll get the same time Hijiri got, right?
I get it.
Hijiri, huh?
Yeah?
Basically, the racing technique he used to set the course record.
So that would be the ideal way to race pretty much.

If I add Hijiri's technique to yer awesome tuning, that makes me the winner.
Wait a minute, that ain't right.
Okay, makes sense now.
But guess what?
If I get the same time as him, it means I won't be any faster than him.
No matter how good our race car is tuned, it won't ever be faster than Hijiri's car.
No no no, that ain't gonna happen.
It's first place or nothin'!
That's bull!
I'm aiming for the top spot! Faster than all the other guys out there!
GRAB
What the hell is yer problem!?
Racing just ain't that simple.
Gunma.
But we'll be able to rank among the best scores!

...
BAM
Anyway!
No matter what you say, I step on the brakes when I want ...
...and I stay off the brakes when I damn well please!
Hya!
CHOP
Hey, these look awful tasty, Granny.
Are they going on a picnic together?
Mats-uura?
Absolutely not. These are for Matsuura and Kinoshita!
Geez, gimme one at least.
Took the day off work to paint your race car!
They're already over at the Tsukuba garage.


I dunno. What if they paint it up lookin' all stupid?
...
Since it's our debut race and all, a boring white race car just don't seem right.
Plus we gotta change its number, since we're starting in the middle of the season.
They've volunteered to do it for us.

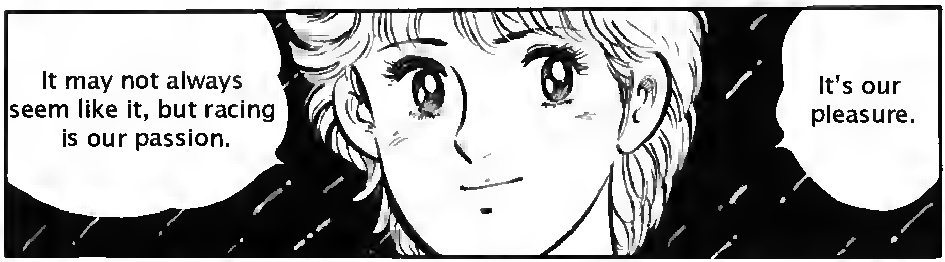

Don't worry about that. He may not look it, but Matsuura is a skilled designer.
Oh yeah?
PIP

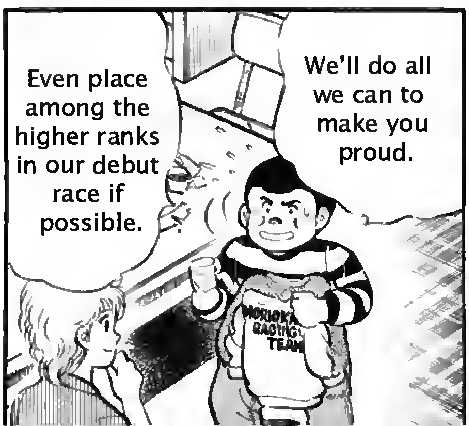
Hello.
See there? Speak of the devil.

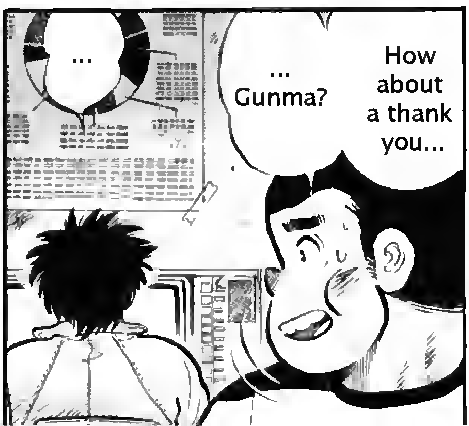
?
Junko should be back soon with something interesting.

I thought the team could use these sweatshirts.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
MORIOKA RACING TEAM

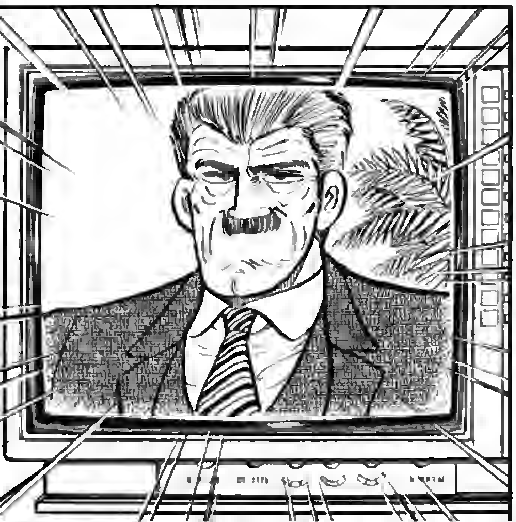
I'm... speechless.
Wow... All this... for us?
Thanks so much for all your help.


It may not always seem like it, but racing is our passion.
It's our pleasure.

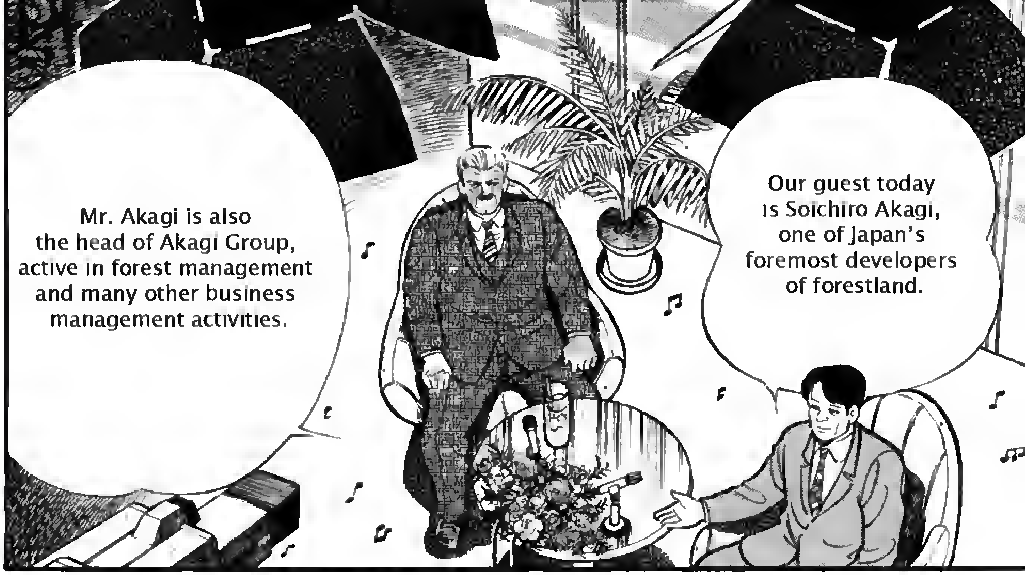

Even place among the higher ranks in our debut race if possible.
We'll do all we can to make you proud.


...
... Gunma?
How about a thank you...

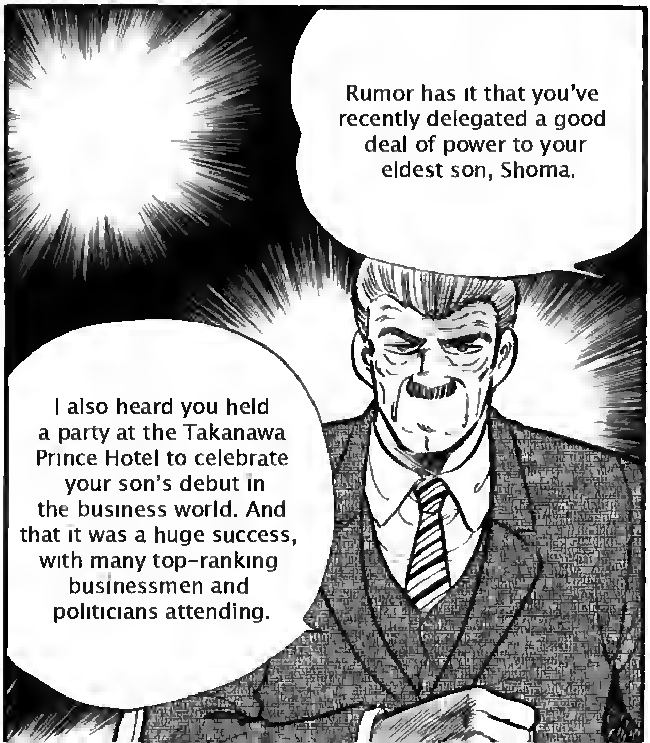
First place!



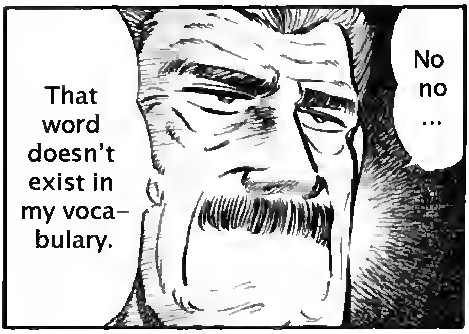
Hear that, daddy dearest? First place.


Our guest today is Soichiro Akagi, one of Japan's foremost developers of forestland.
Mr. Akagi is also the head of Akagi Group, active in forest management and many other business management activities.

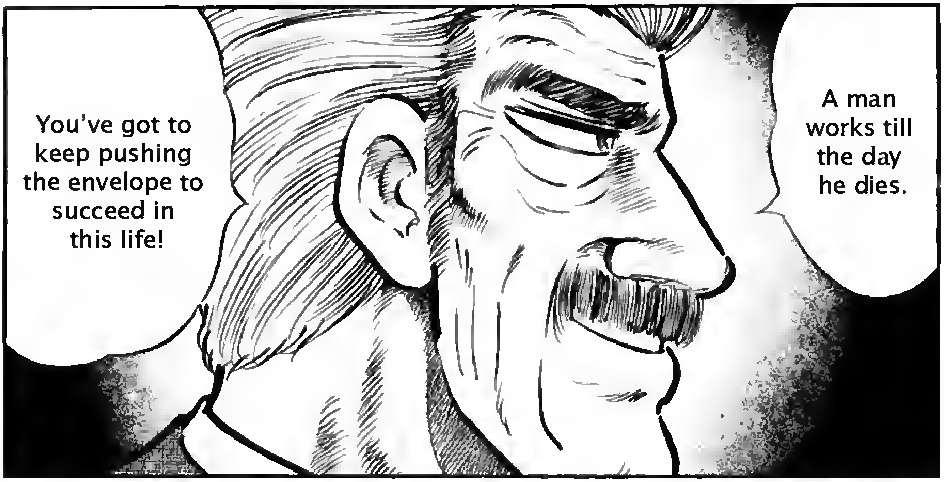
Who's that?
?
It's him! It's... Gunma's daddy...


Rumor has it that you've recently delegated a good deal of power to your eldest son, Shoma.
I also heard you held a party at the Takanawa Prince Hotel to celebrate your son's debut in the business world. And that it was a huge success, with many top-ranking businessmen and politicians attending.

Eventually, those two will have to take the reins at Akagi Group, so I had them studying economics in the United States for quite some time.
Well, I only have two sons. Shoma the eldest, and his younger brother Yuma.


That word doesn't exist in my voca-bulary.
No no ...

HA HA HA
Does this mean you may be retiring soon?

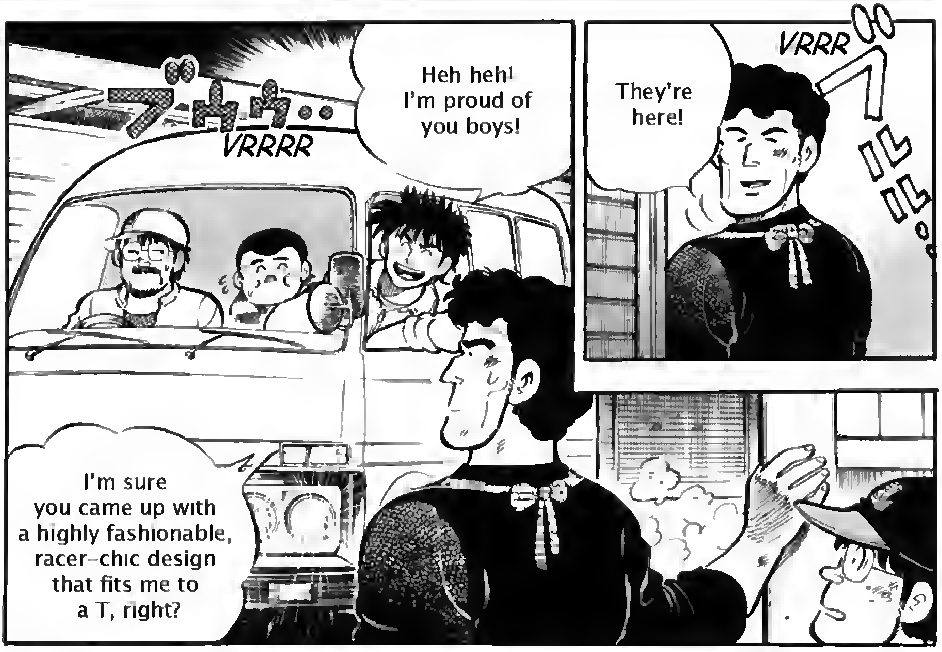

You've got to keep pushing the envelope to succeed in this life!
A man works till the day he dies.

PIP
Interpret it however you like.
Could that be interpreted as an announcement? To run for the House of Representatives?

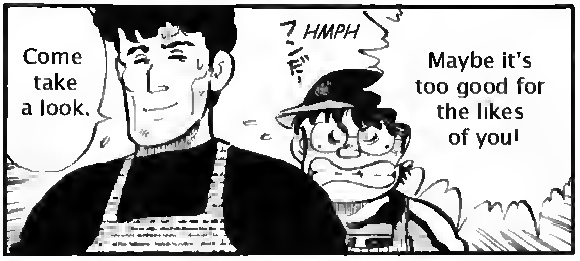
HONK
HONK
ブー
ブー

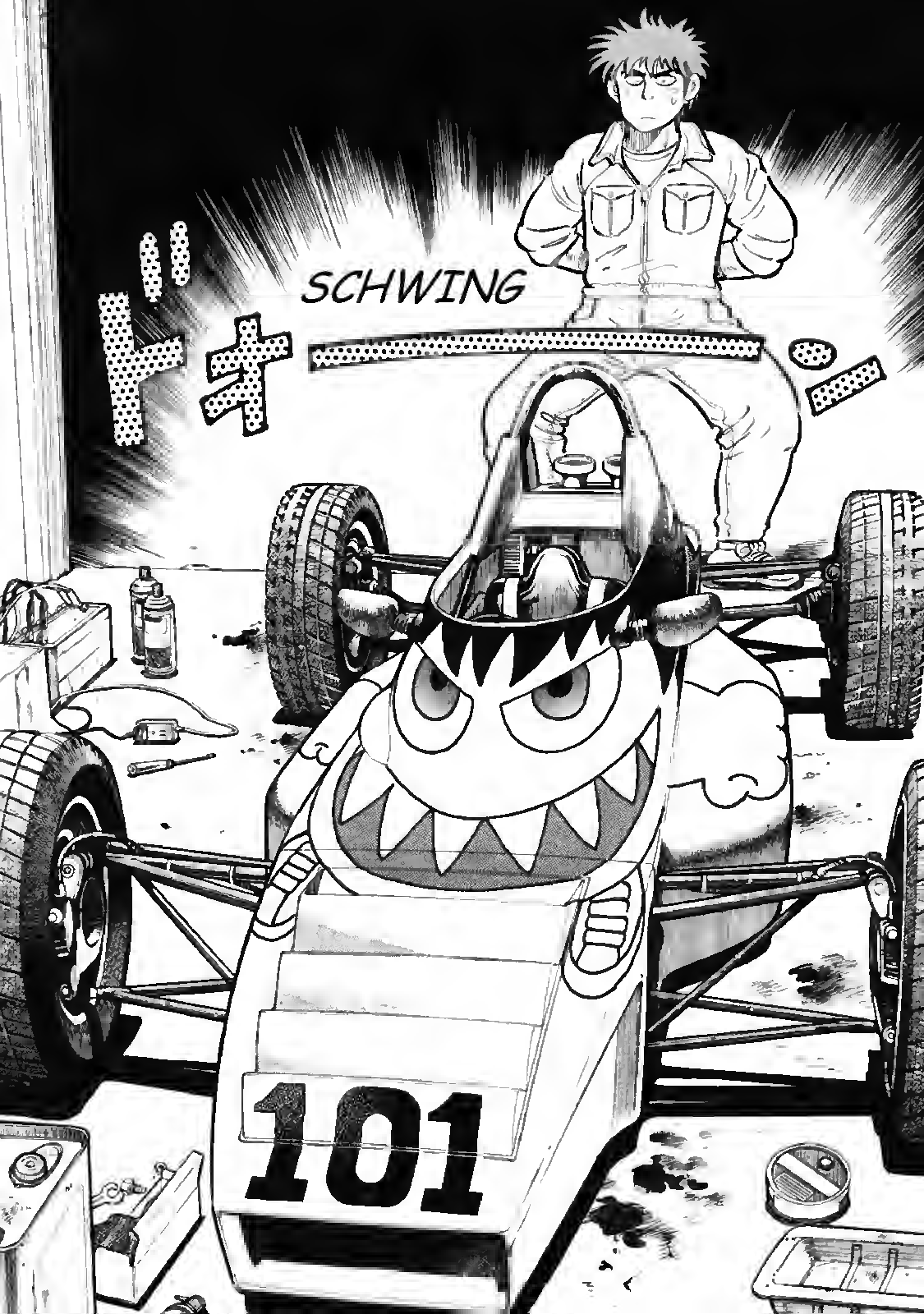
First place, huh?

...
...

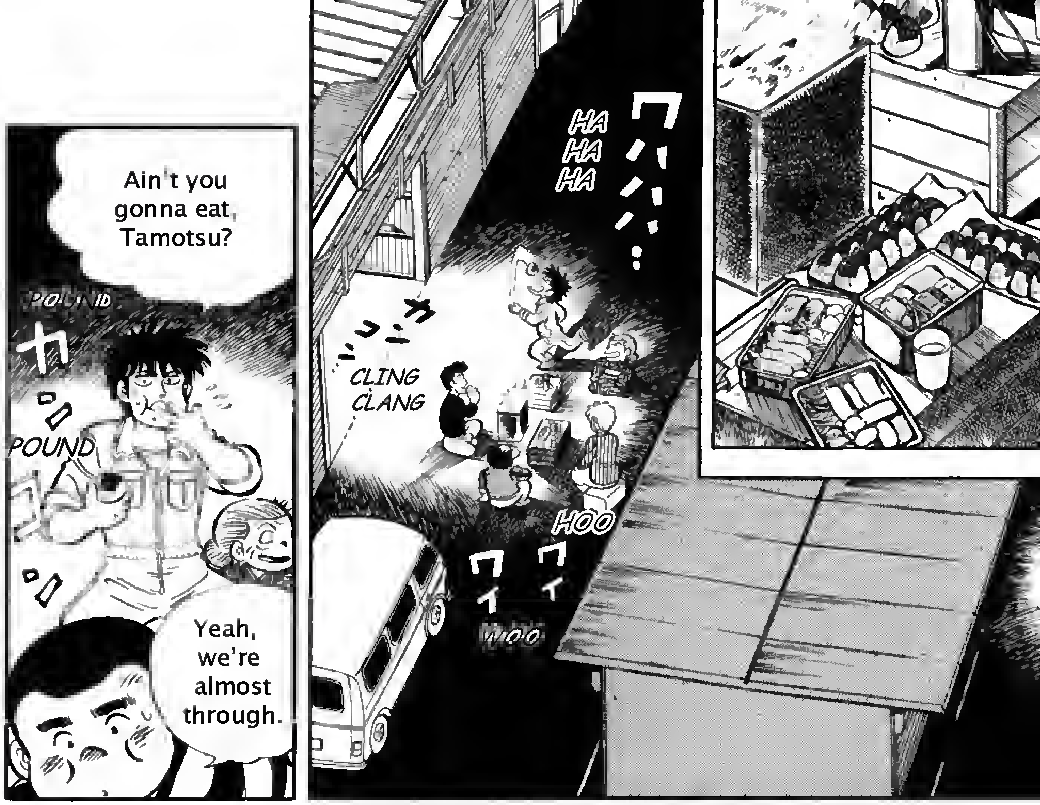

ブォォン
VRRRR
Heh heh! I'm proud of you boys!
They're here!
VRRR
ブルルル
I'm sure you came up with a highly fashionable, racer-chic design that fits me to a T, right?

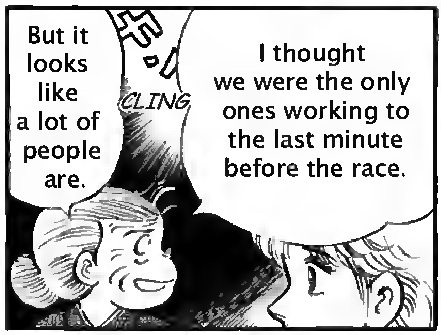
Don't mind if I do.

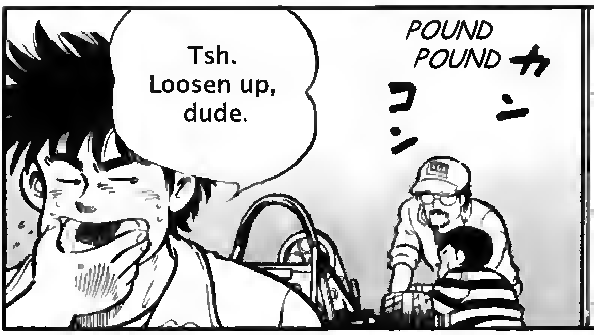

Come take a look.
フ・ン
HMPH
Maybe it's too good for the likes of you!

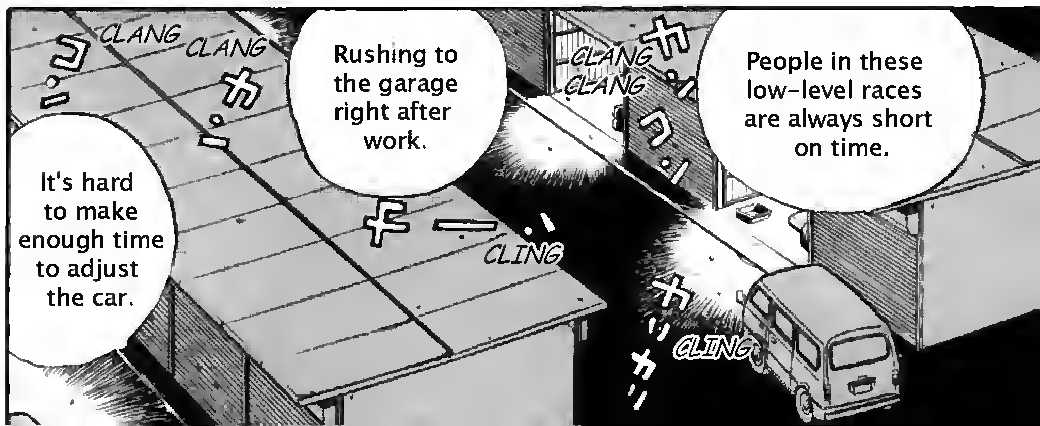

SCHWING
101

Don't blame me.
Oh my goodness!
Wow.
NGK
Man, that's over the top.
A little too out there?
So you get it?
This thing really does fit me to a T!
I get it!
I like it.
Racer-chic at its finest.
...
WHEW
...
NGK


Ain't you gonna eat, Tamotsu?
POUND
Yeah, we're almost through.
HA HA HA
CLING CLANG
HOO
WOO

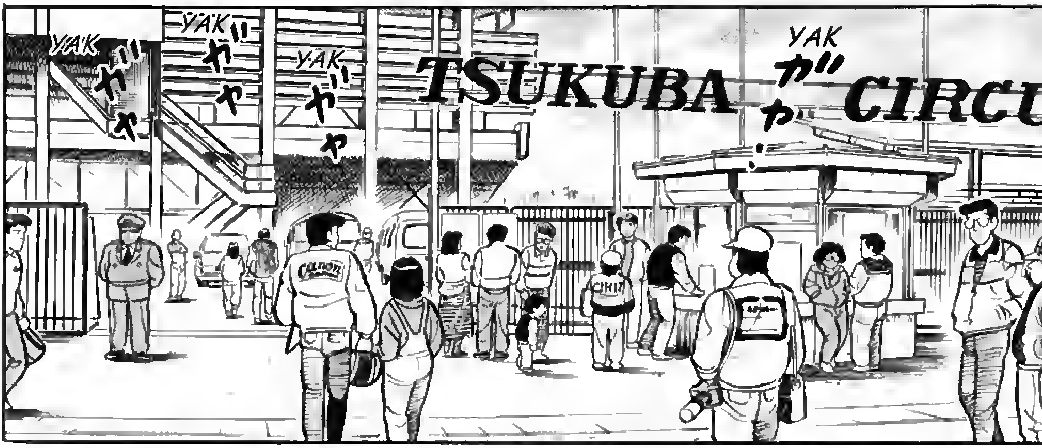

But it looks like a lot of people are.
CLING
I thought we were the only ones working to the last minute before the race.


Tsh. Loosen up, dude.
POUND POUND

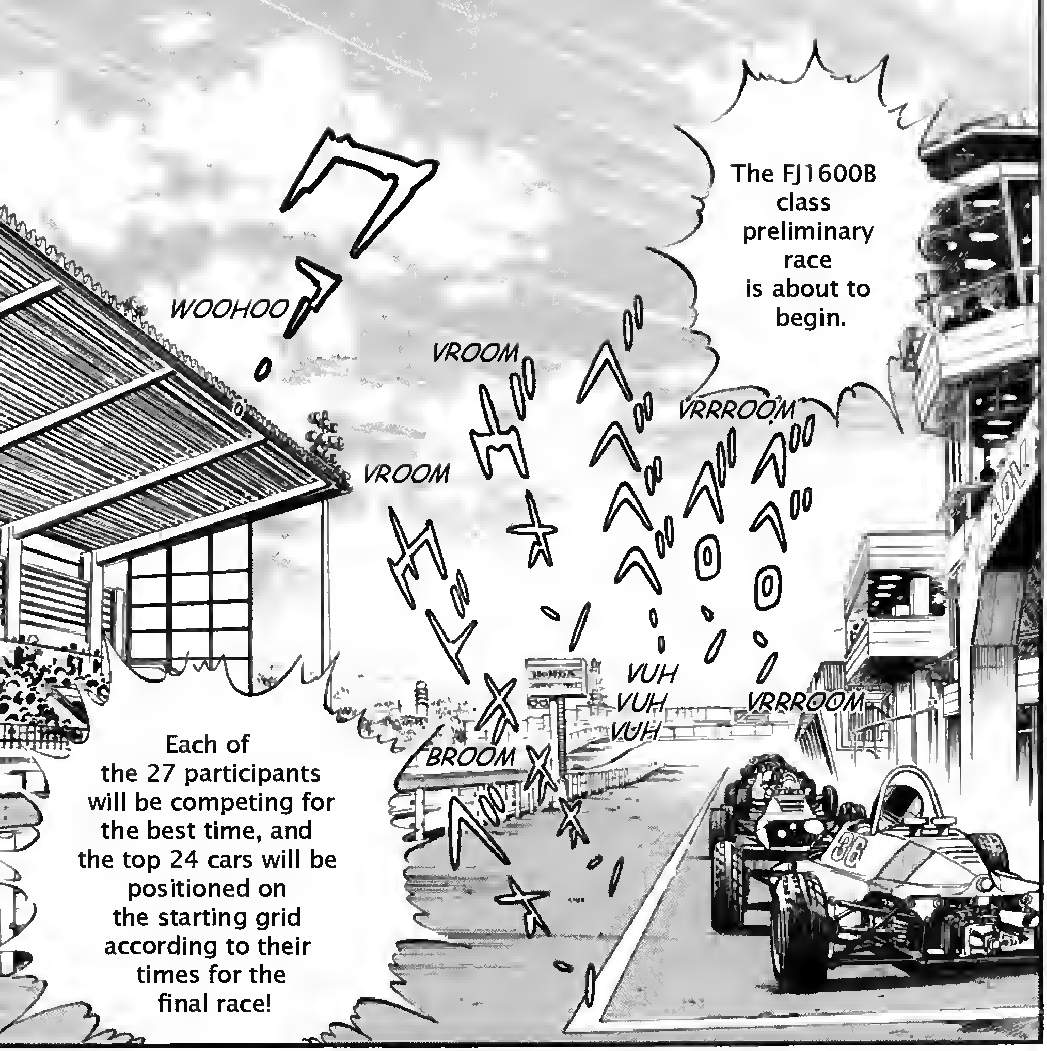

CLANG CLANG
It's hard to make enough time to adjust the car.
Rushing to the garage right after work.
CLING
CLANG CLANG
People in these low-level races are always short on time.
CLING

Those with the money are probably just staying at a nearby hotel.
There's only a few places to sleep above these garages.
You do that.
I'll pass these out to the other racers now, Auntie.
Tsukuba doesn't have the facilities you'll find at the Suzuka Circuit.
HA HA HA
A man's gotta be hungry to get what he wants in this world!
But that's a good thing!
PISSSSSSSSS
ジョオオ
...
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
RIBBIT

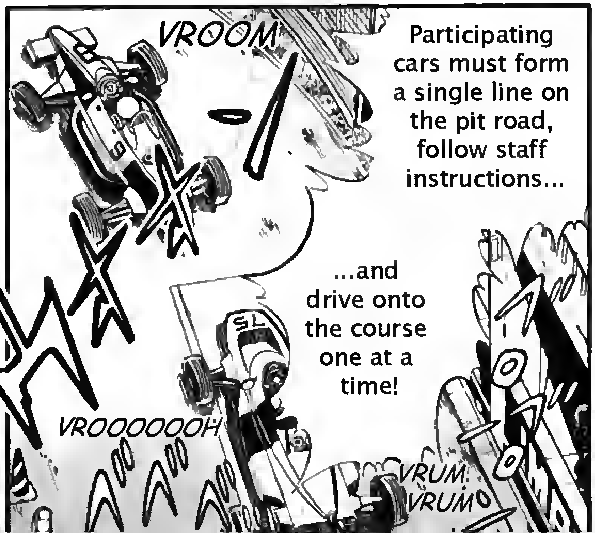
NISSAN
NISS

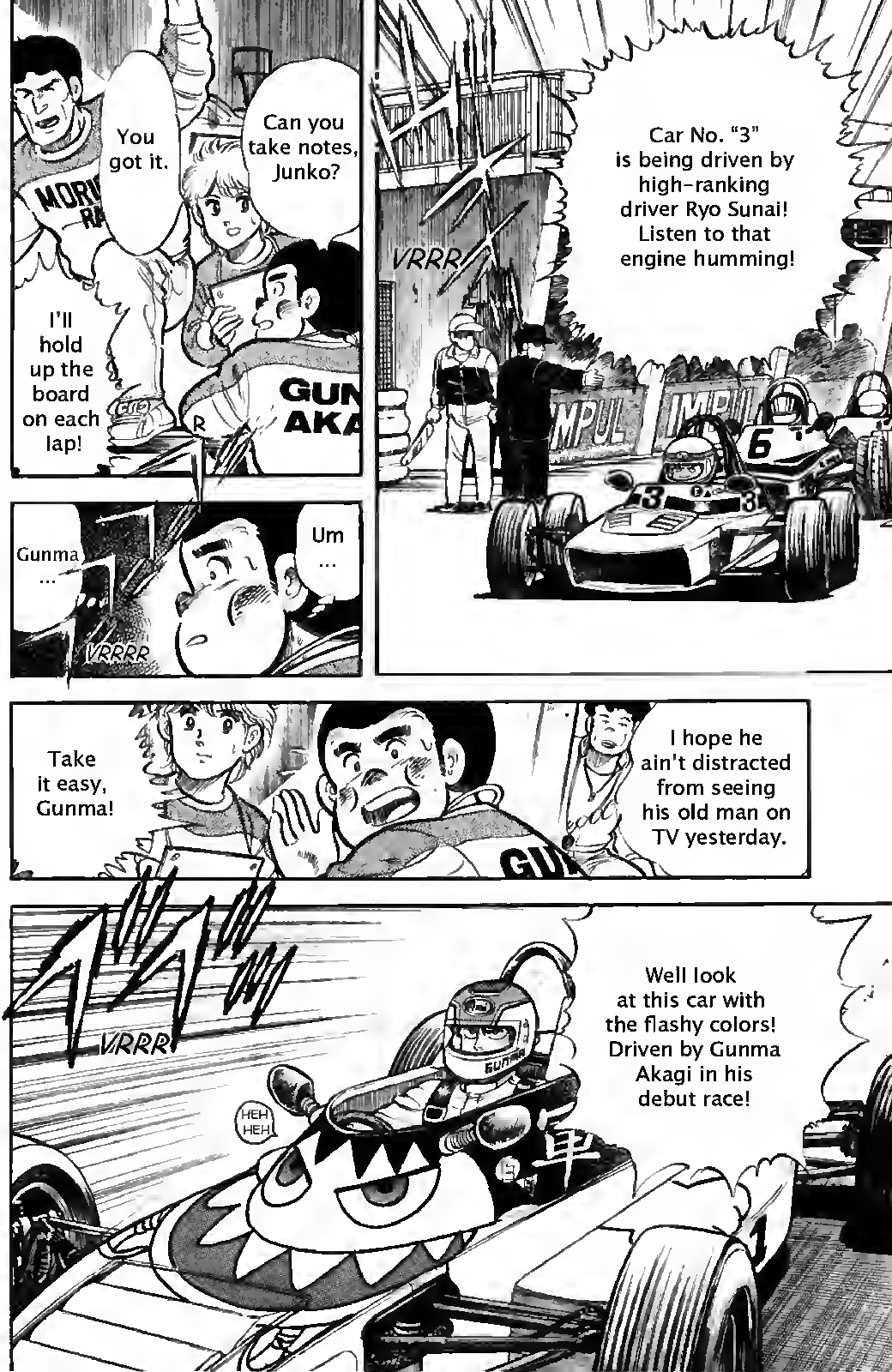

YAK
YAK
YAK
YAK
TSUKUBA
CIRCU

Wow.
BRAAAAAAAAAH
VROOOOOH
オートレース補助施設
Auto-Race Support Facility

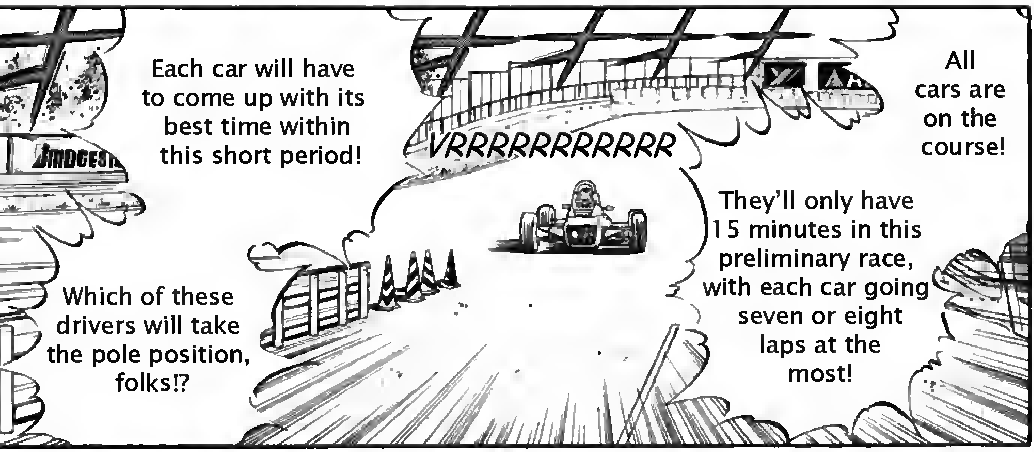

WOOHOO
VROOM
VROOM
VRRROOM
The FJ1600B class preliminary race is about to begin.
VUH
VUH
VUH
VRRROOM
BROOM
Each of the 27 participants will be competing for the best time, and the top 24 cars will be positioned on the starting grid according to their times for the final race!

The No. "1" has been designated for last year's champion racer, Kazuto Hijiri! His car is the "Team Hijiri 36J."
HIZIRI

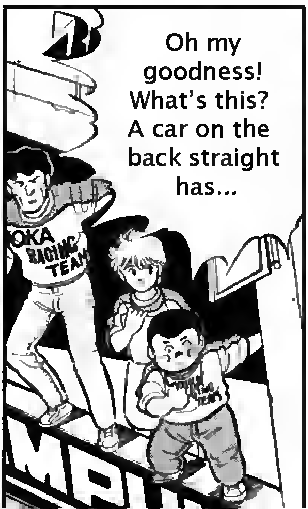

VROOM
Participating cars must form a single line on the pit road, follow staff instructions...
...and drive onto the course one at a time!
VROOOOOOH
VRUM
VRUM

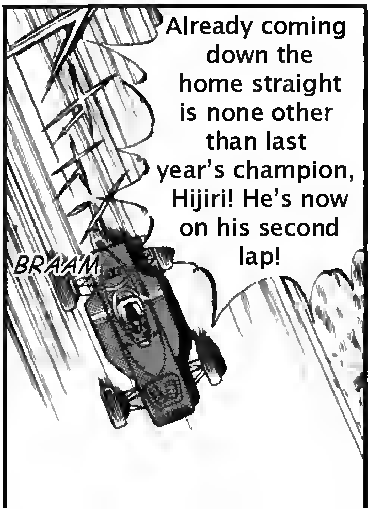

You got it.
Can you take notes, Junko?
I'll hold up the board on each lap!
Car No. "3" is being driven by high-ranking driver Ryo Sunai! Listen to that engine humming!
VRRR
Gunma ...
Um ...
VRRRR
Take it easy, Gunma!
I hope he ain't distracted from seeing his old man on TV yesterday.
VRRR
HEH HEH
Well look at this car with the flashy colors! Driven by Gunma Akagi in his debut race!

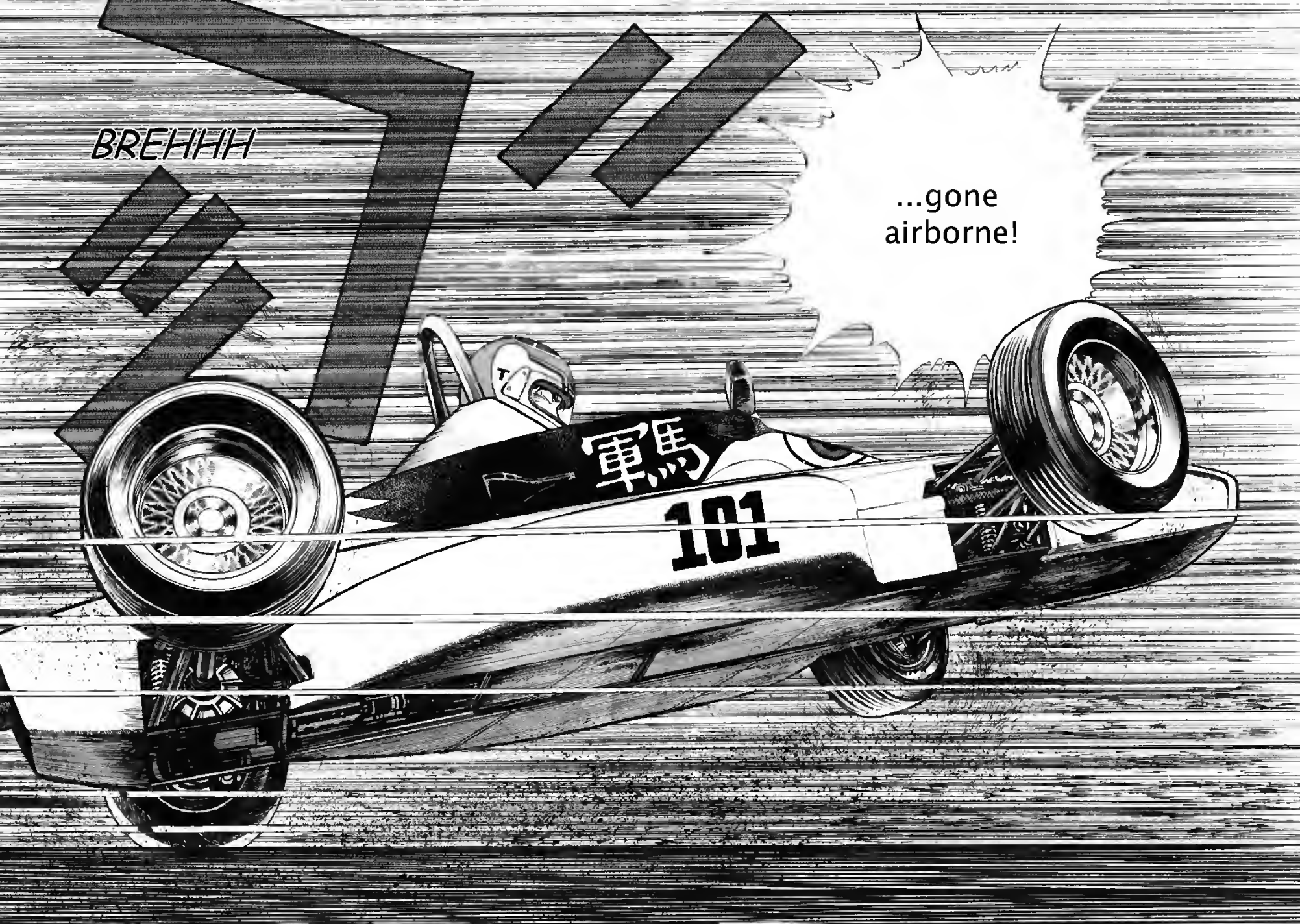
ZOOOOOM
MIRIOKA Racing Team
あはは…
AHHA HA HA
Heh! They're laughing at him!
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA
とぉ
WHOA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA


Each car will have to come up with its best time within this short period!
VRRRRRRRRRR
All cars are on the course!
They'll only have 15 minutes in this preliminary race, with each car going seven or eight laps at the most!
Which of these drivers will take the pole position, folks!?

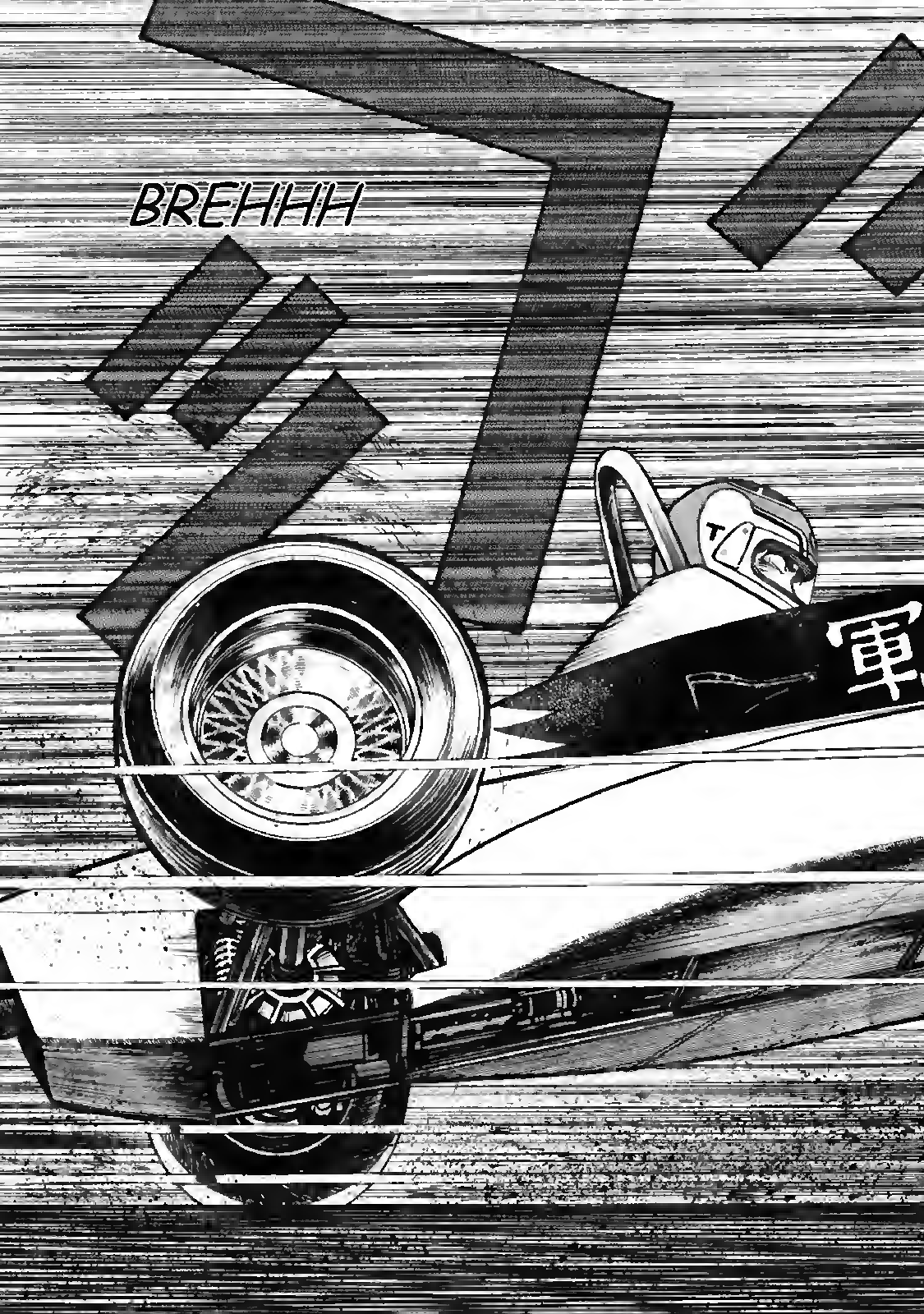
ドキ!
HMP
RIOKA


Oh my goodness! What's this? A car on the back straight has...
OKA RACING TEAM


Already coming down the home straight is none other than last year's champion, Hijiri! He's now on his second lap!
BRAAM


BREHHH
...gone airborne!
軍馬
101

...gone
airborne!
101

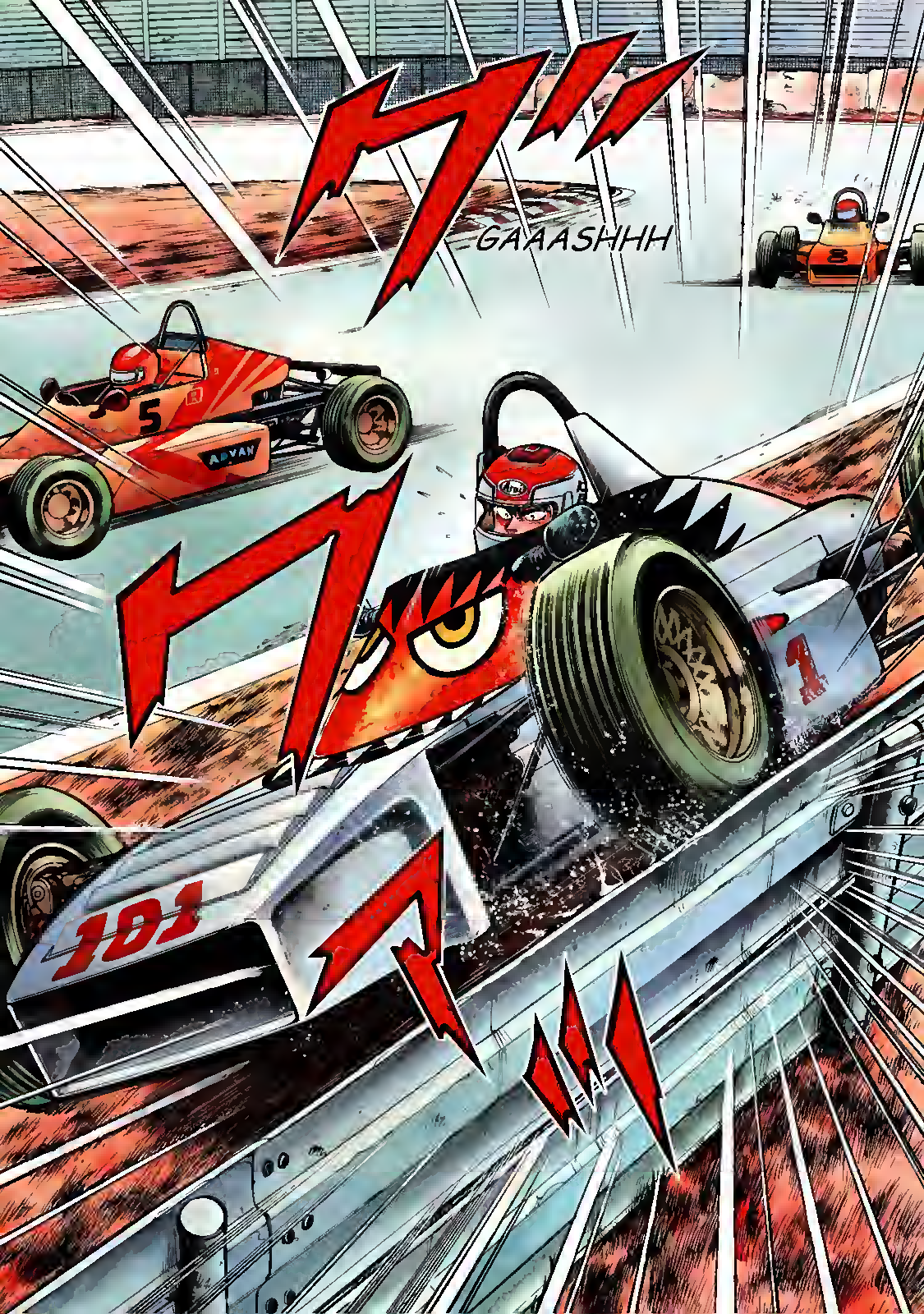

BREHHH
軍

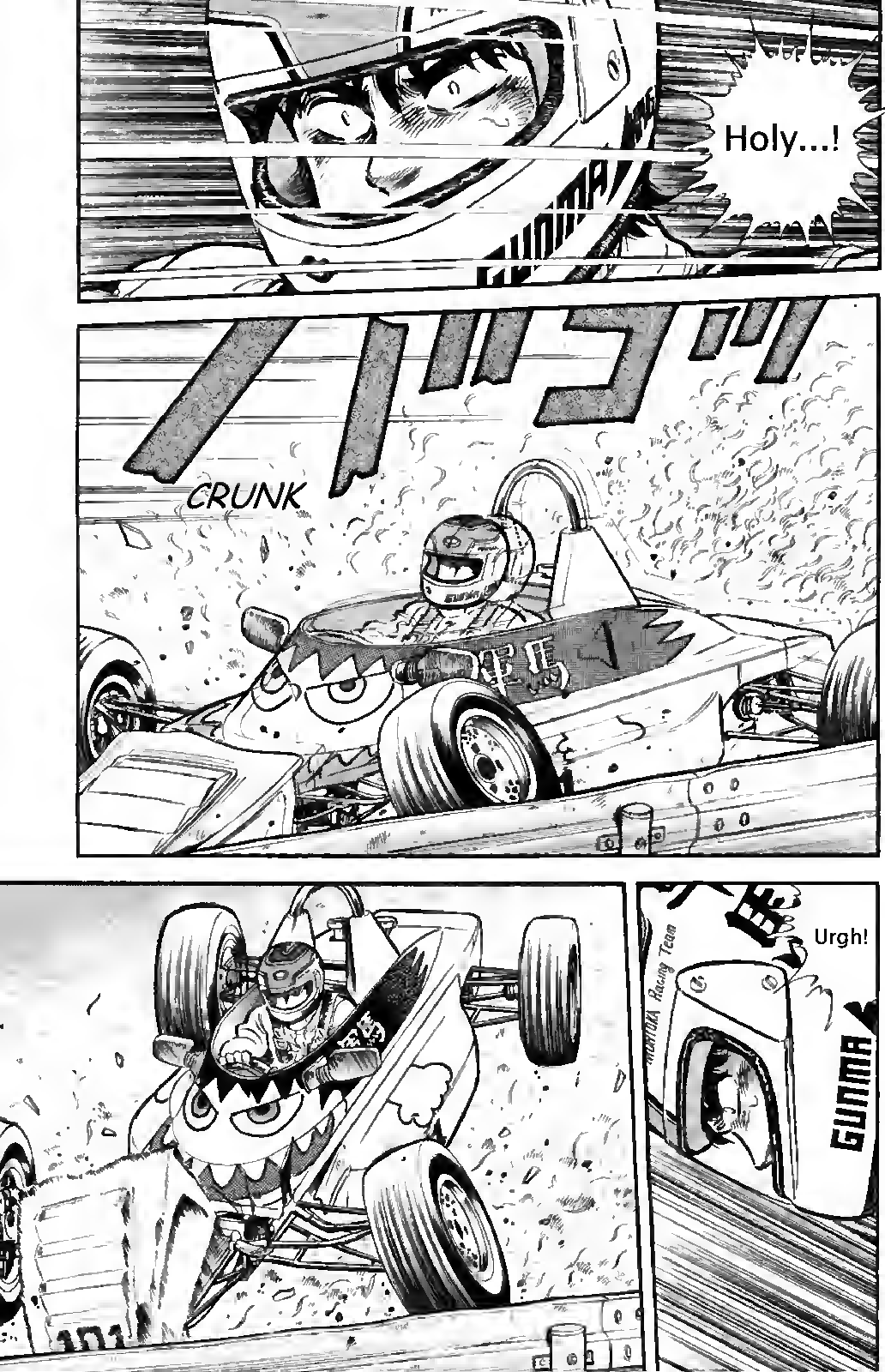
101
No. 101,
Gunma
Akagi!
What in
the...!?
Wha...!
MORIO

F
Vol.3

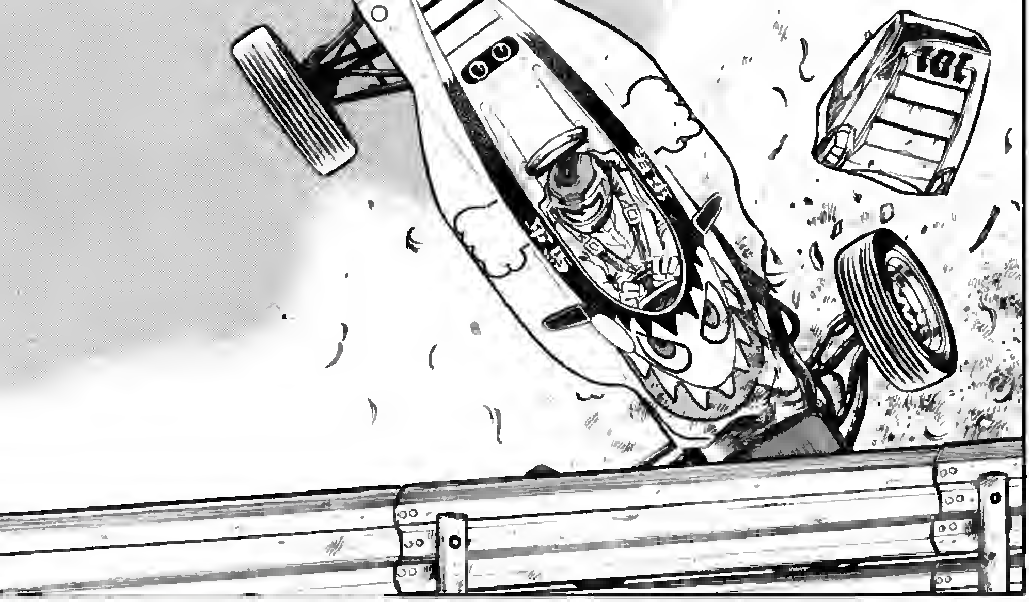
Chapter 2:

Unexpected Trouble


GAAASHHH
5
ADVAN
8
1
101


Holy...!
CRUNK
Urgh!
GUNMA
GUNMA Racing Team

BRAAH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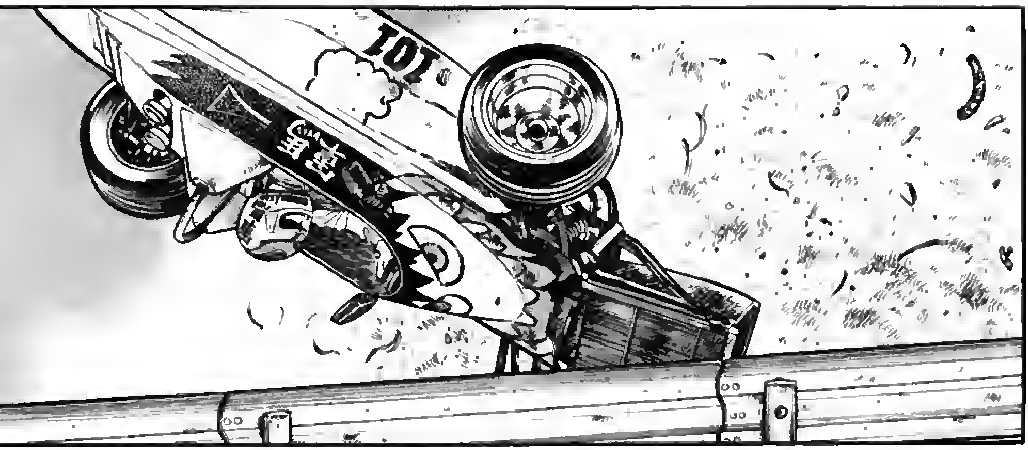
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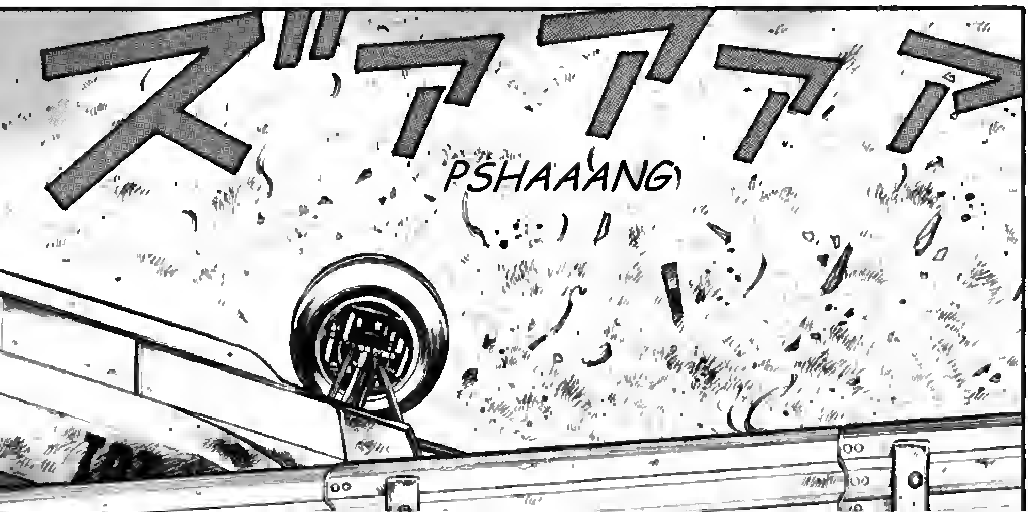
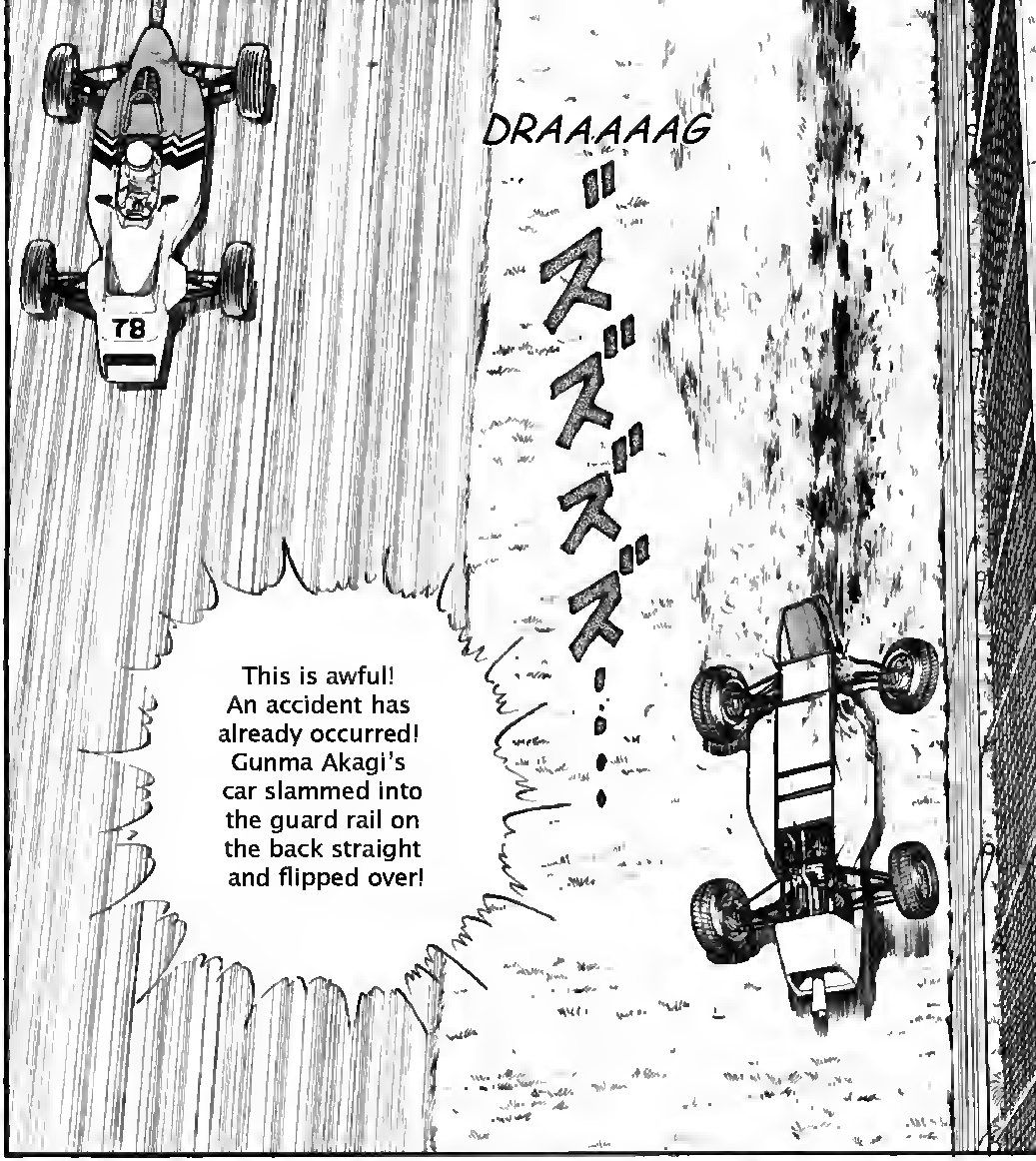
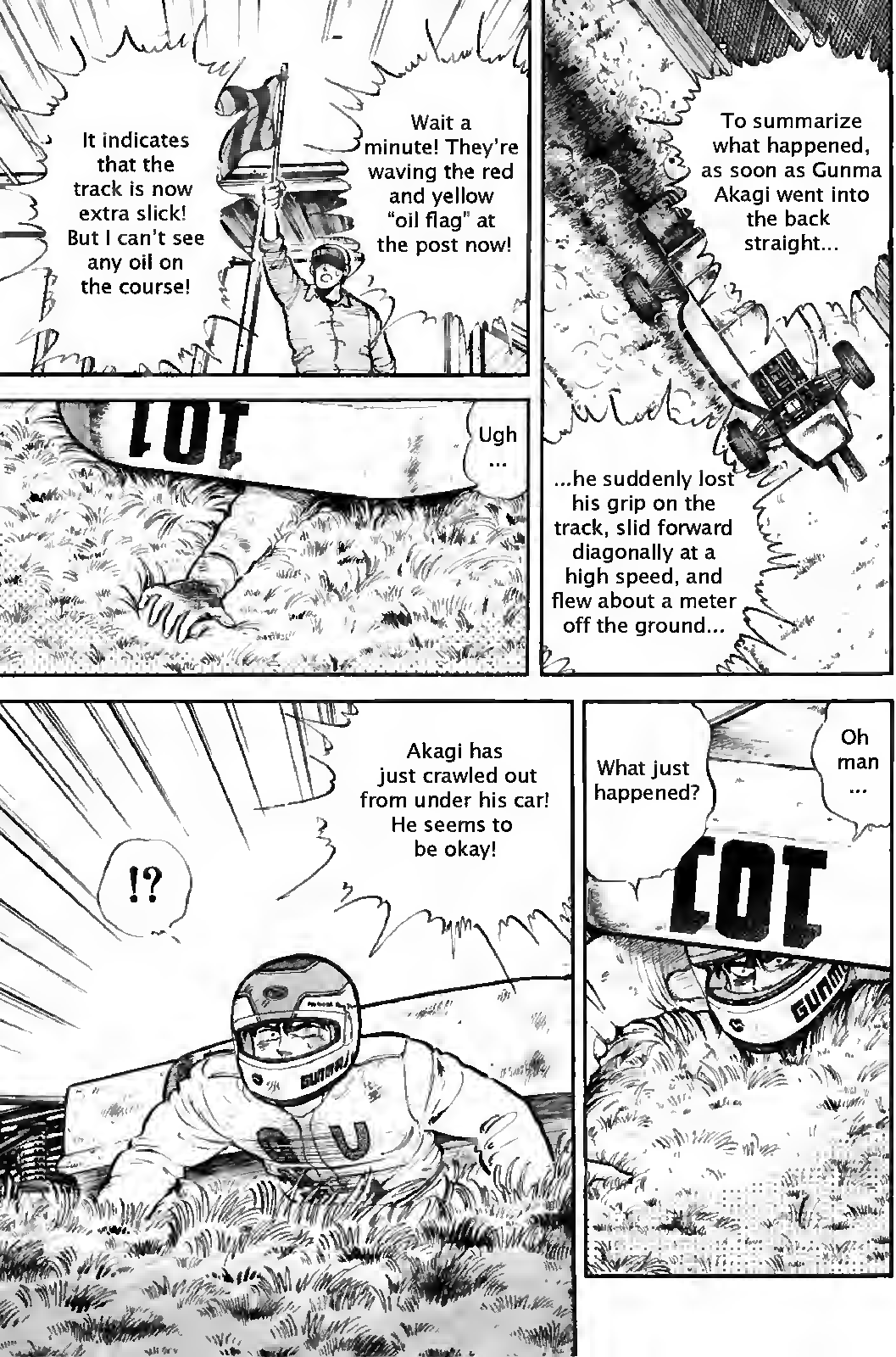
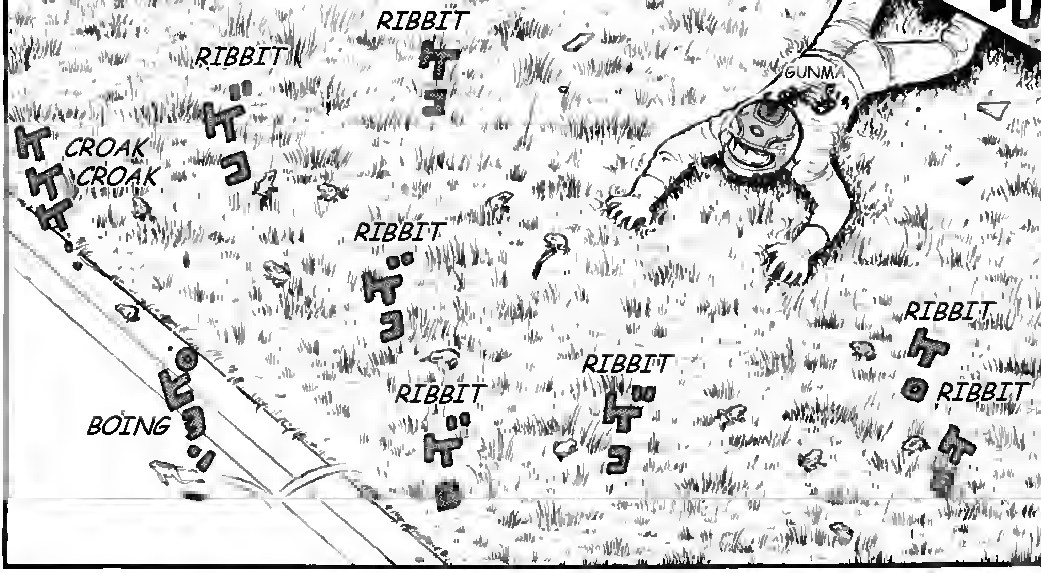

スーアーア
PSHAAANG

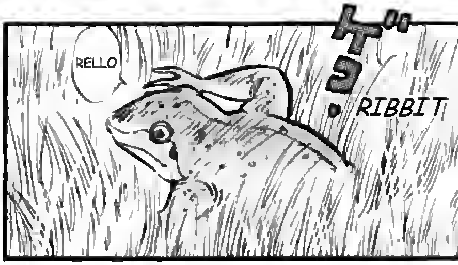

78
DRAAAAAG
ズズズズ…
This is awful! An accident has already occurred! Gunma Akagi's car slammed into the guard rail on the back straight and flipped over!

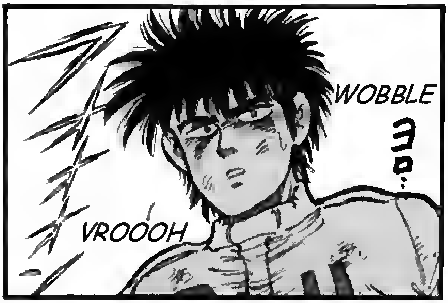
What happened!?
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
We certainly hope he's okay!
His car has completely flipped over, stopped on the side of the track!


It indicates that the track is now extra slick! But I can't see any oil on the course!
Wait a minute! They're waving the red and yellow "oil flag" at the post now!
To summarize what happened, as soon as Gunma Akagi went into the back straight...
...he suddenly lost his grip on the track, slid forward diagonally at a high speed, and flew about a meter off the ground...
COT
Ugh ...
!?
Akagi has just crawled out from under his car! He seems to be okay!
What just happened?
Oh man ...
COT
GUNMA


RIBBIT
RIBBIT
CROAK
CROAK
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
BOING
GUNMA

...


RELLO
RIBBIT


WOBBLE
VROOOH

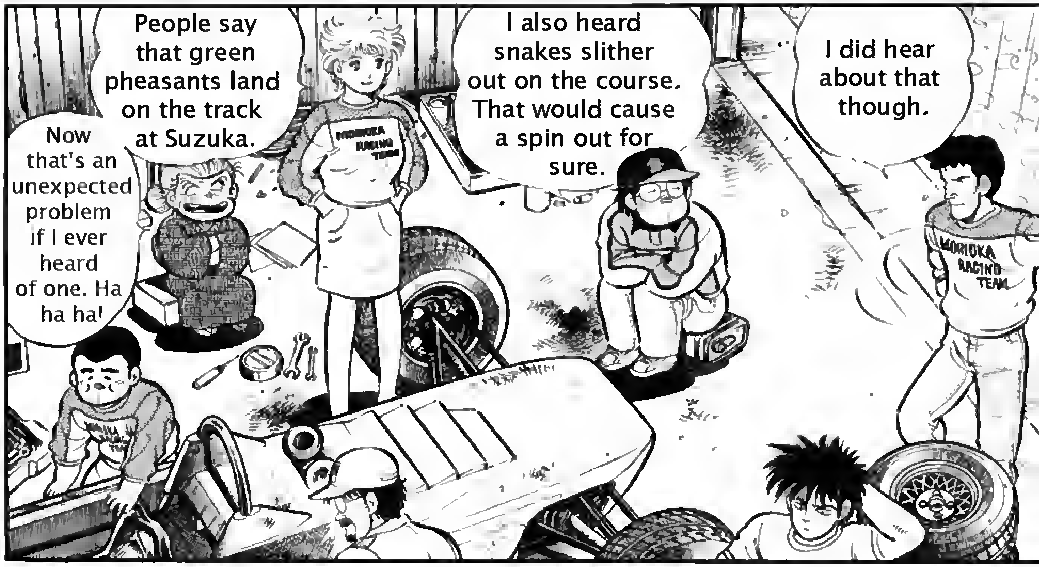
He's walking back out on the green! Perhaps to find out what slipped him up!
But it's extremely dangerous to approach the course like that!

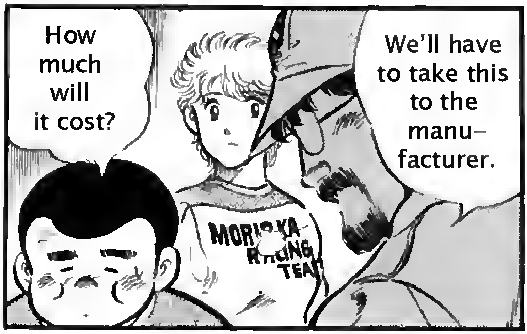
Gunma Akagi is back on his feet!
WOBBLE
GUNMA
GUNMA

VROOOH
Get off the course! Immediately!
SWOOOSH
Just my luck.
Hmph.
In his debut race, Gunma Akagi slipped and crashed into a guard rail, damaging his subframe, and no longer able to finish. He has failed to qualify, with an unknown best time.
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
ZOOOOOM

I mean, who'd have thought there'd be frogs on the course?
PITTER
PATTER
PITTER
Just bad luck.
GUNMA
AKAGI

SHAAAA
Just one of those things.

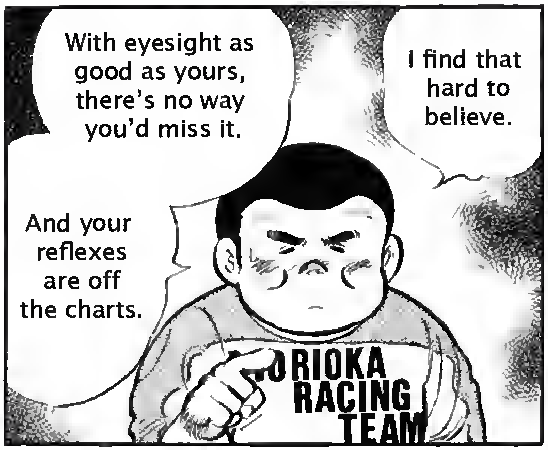

People say that green pheasants land on the track at Suzuka.
I also heard snakes slither out on the course. That would cause a spin out for sure.
I did hear about that though.
Now that's an unexpected problem if I ever heard of one. Ha ha ha!
MORIOKA RACING TEAM


How much will it cost?
We'll have to take this to the manu-facturer.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM

That damn Hijiri...
TOSS
Okay.
I'd say about 200 thousand yen.
TAK
He must be on his victory lap by now!
SPLAK
...
I woulda got first place if this didn't happen!
That bastard got lucky!
My life sucks!
Screw this.

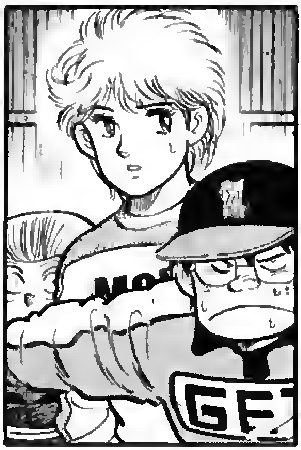
My debut race and everything.
Real nice.
PIT
PAT
PIT
...
It is pretty bad, Gunma.
It's pretty bad how you messed this up.
What I mean is...
Is that all you can say!?
Pretty bad...?
SHAAAA
!?
...it's your fault.
What I'm saying is...
I don't think I did.
SWOOP
Tamotsu, did I just hear you right?

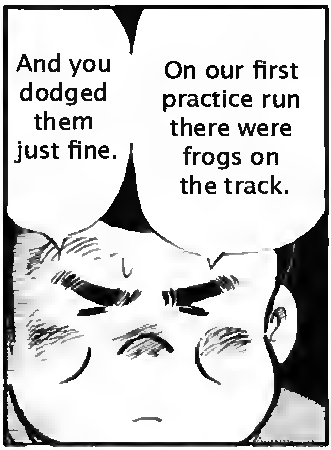
The frog's an innocent victim in all this.
No it ain't.
WHOA
You stupid ...!
It's the stupid frog's fault!
What do you mean it's my fault!?
...
Quit talkin' out yer ass, Tamotsu!
Whoa, easy!
The back tire I'd understand, but you coulda dodged it with the front tire.
How come you didn't dodge it, Gunma?
So what!?
Yeah !?
There's still blood on it.
Your front tire hit the frog.


With eyesight as good as yours, there's no way you'd miss it.
I find that hard to believe.
And your reflexes are off the charts.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM

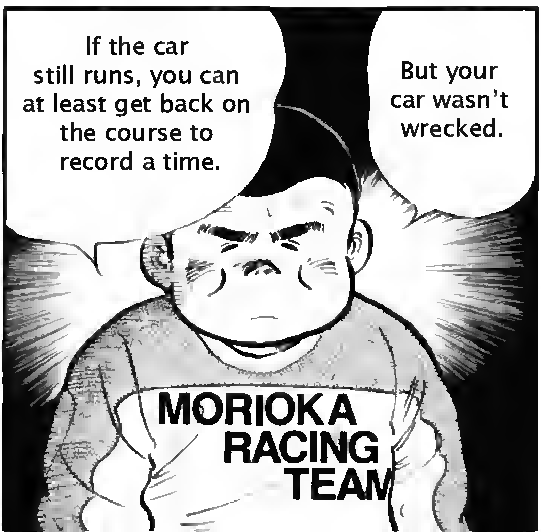
You didn't see it on the track?
Dodge it!? What are you sayin', fat boy!?

...dodgin' 'em like that made me spin out.
Sure I did, but ...




And you dodged them just fine.
On our first practice run there were frogs on the track.

...

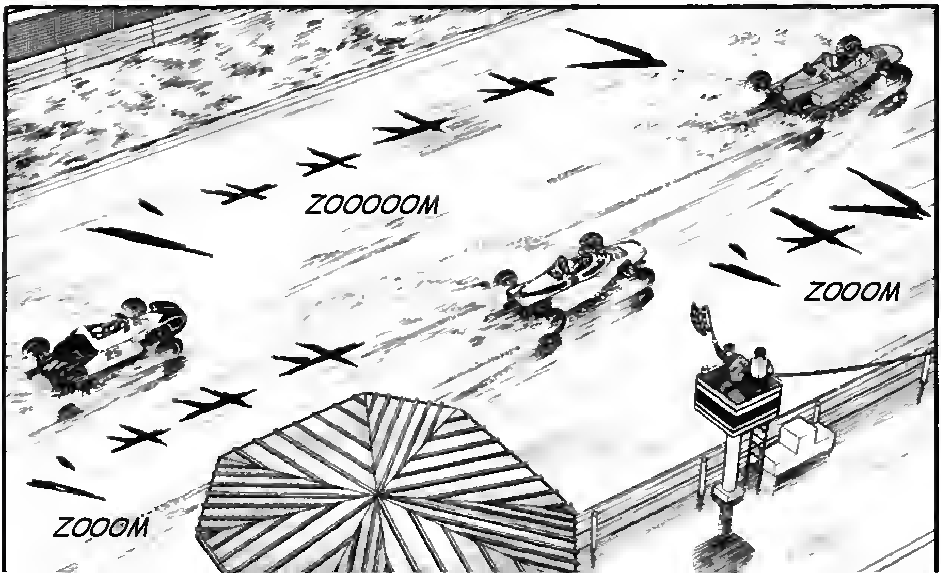

If the car still runs, you can at least get back on the course to record a time.
But your car wasn't wrecked.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM

...you missed something on the track that a racer with good eyes like yours shoulda never missed.
You squashed a frog with the front tire, and lost that tire's traction.
PITTER
Listen to me, Gunma.
PATTER
To summarize your drivin' today...
PITTER
Normally if your front tire slips like that, you'd take your foot off the gas.
But for some reason, you kept your foot on the gas.
And popped some kinda wheelie in the process, goin' airborne and smashin' into the guard rail!
...and you made 'em.
Basically, those are two mistakes a racer would never make...

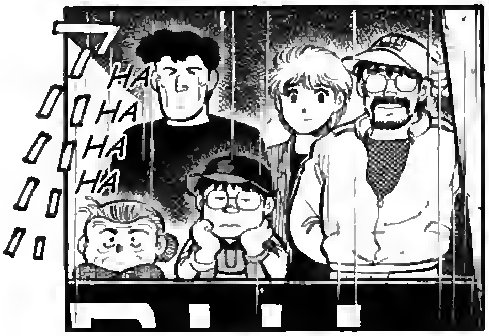
...I have an idea, cuz you and me have known each other since we were kids
As to why you did that...
... I can't let you off the hook.
But for this...
If your car wrecks, it can always be repaired.
But we've only got one Gunma Akagi, and he can't be replaced.
You don't get it.
There are certain mistakes in racing that can't be fixed.
Hey, take it easy Tamotsu.
MORIOKA
It was his debut race, and he was just a little over-excited, that's all. Nobody's to blame.

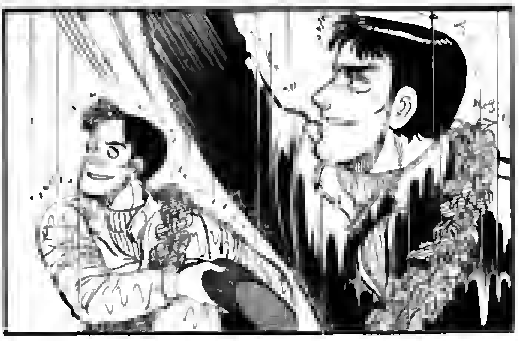
NGK
That's what Tamotsu's trying to say.
And our dreams are ridin' on his success.
Junko's dream ...
Come on now.
That includes Mr. Morioka's dream, who's done so much for us.
Not my dream.
Matsuura's and Kinoshita's dream...
Granny's dream...
VROOOH
YAY WOOHOO
...and our dream, too. Yours and mine.
MORIOKA

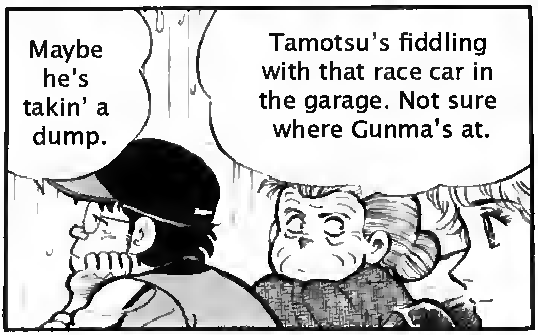
WOO-HOO
ZOOOOOM
WOOSH

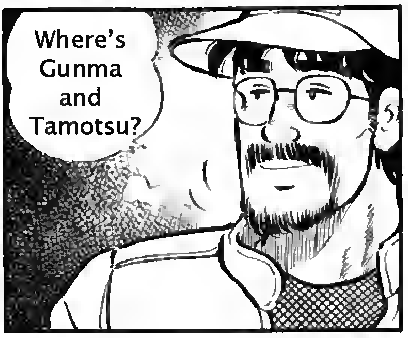

ZOOOOOM
ZOOOM
ZOOOM

YEAH WOOHOO
ALL RIGHT
LAP

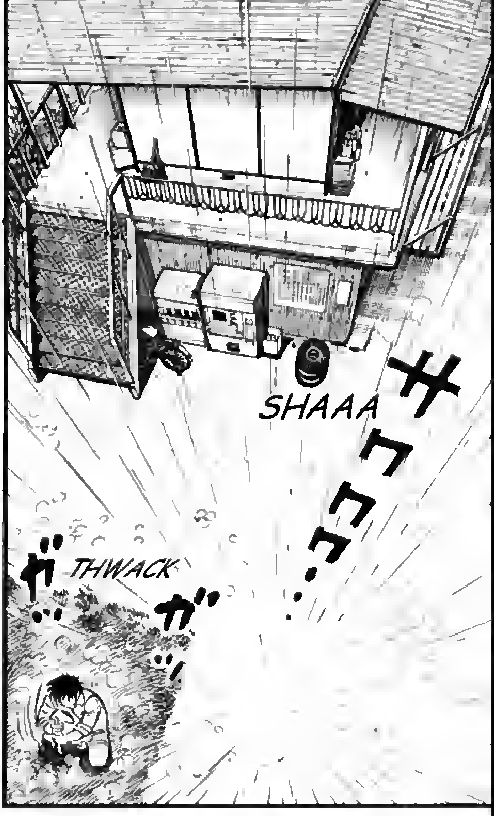

HA
HA
HA
HA



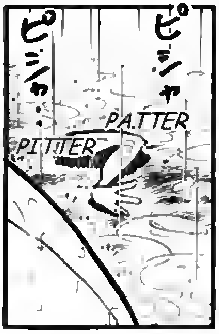

Maybe he's takin' a dump.
Tamotsu's fiddling with that race car in the garage. Not sure where Gunma's at.

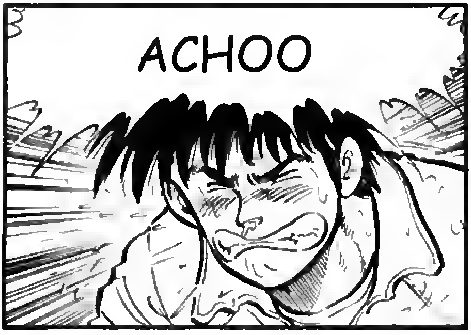

Where's Gunma and Tamotsu?

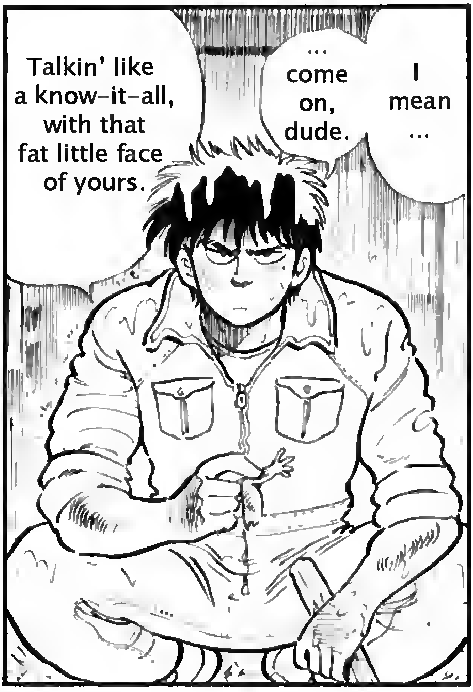
THWACK
THWACK
THWACK


SHAAA
THWACK

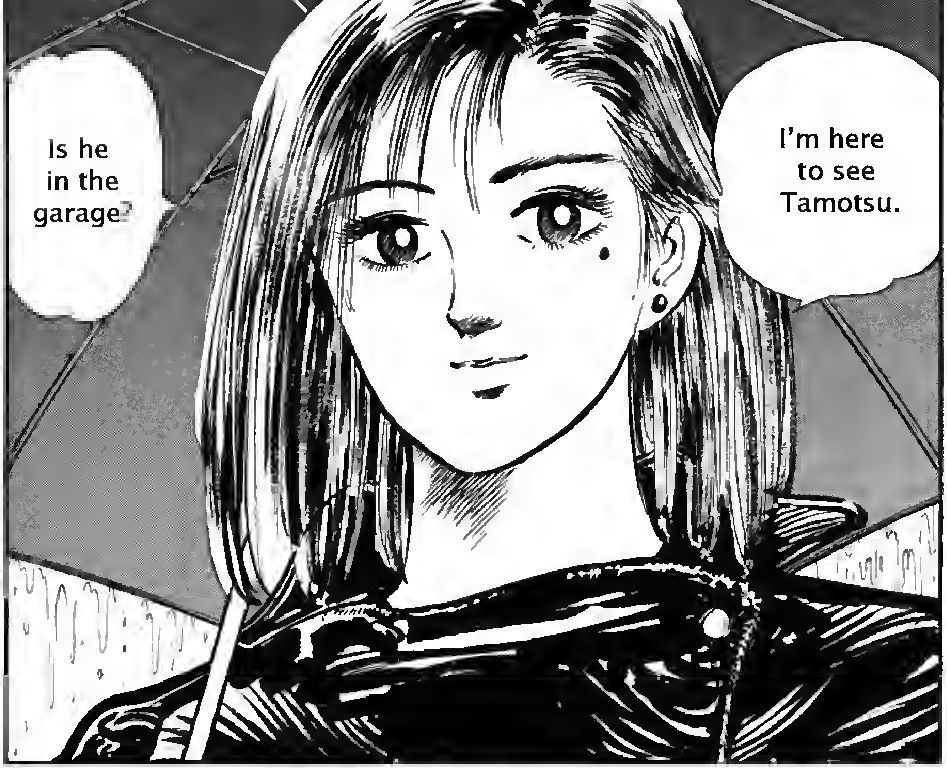
He's really got some nerve.
THWACK


PATTER
PITTER


ACHOO


Talkin' like a know-it-all, with that fat little face of yours.
... come on, dude.
I mean ...

What I'd do for a hot chick right about now.
Oh man.
Rest in peace, stupid frog.
!?
SHAAA
AA

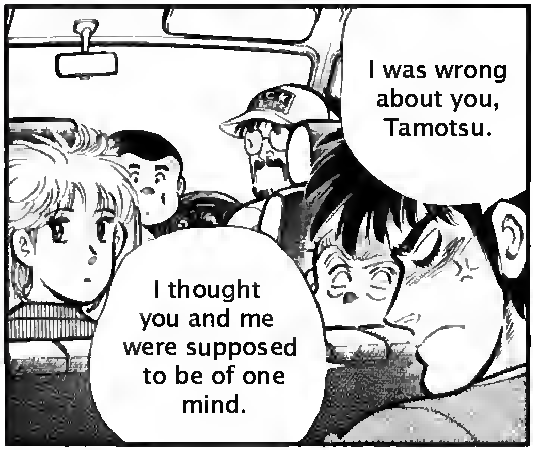

Is he in the garage?
I'm here to see Tamotsu.

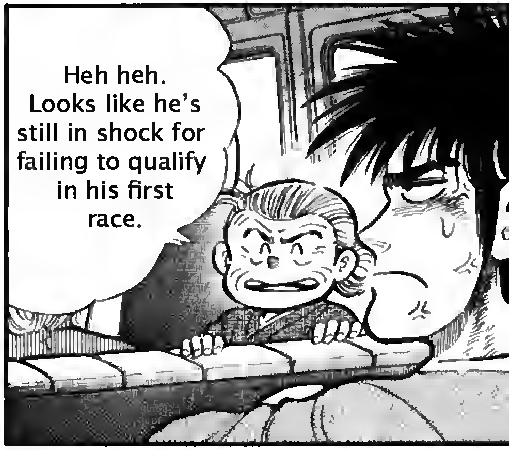
Chapter 3:
What Friends are For

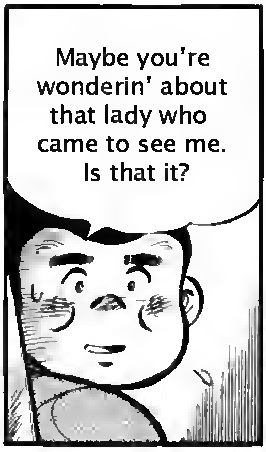
So he's in the garage then?
Why do you wanna see Tamotsu?
SHAAAAA
SHAA
Hold on.
Hey.
Stupid chick.
I said hold on!
WOBBLE
...
It's hard to stand up when it gets like this.
Ouch.
URRRGH
Heh.

Too bad about the race.
Hey there.
You were in Mr. Hijiri's garage.
...
...and you score a hot chick.
tle jerk. I look the other way for a second...

?
HMPH
...what are you pouting about?
Gunma ...
VRRRRRR


I was wrong about you, Tamotsu.
I thought you and me were supposed to be of one mind.


Heh heh. Looks like he's still in shock for failing to qualify in his first race.

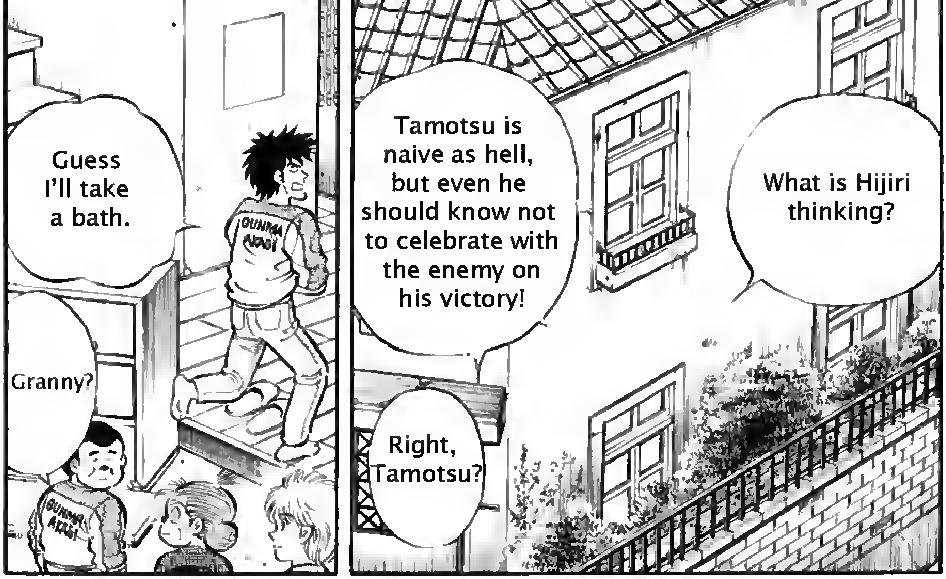

Maybe you're wonderin' about that lady who came to see me. Is that it?

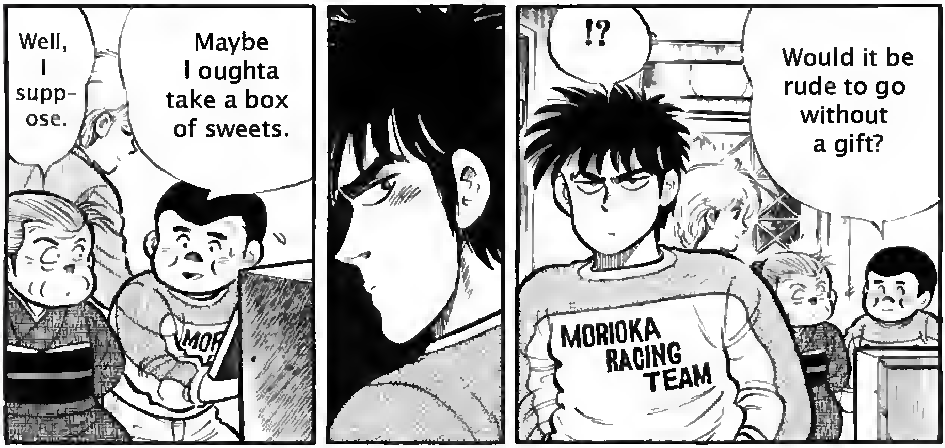
What is he talking about?

Someone I came outta the country with, as a team...
Man, it sure hurts gettin' stabbed in the back by a friend.
...I still can't believe you'd betray me like that.
Hmph.

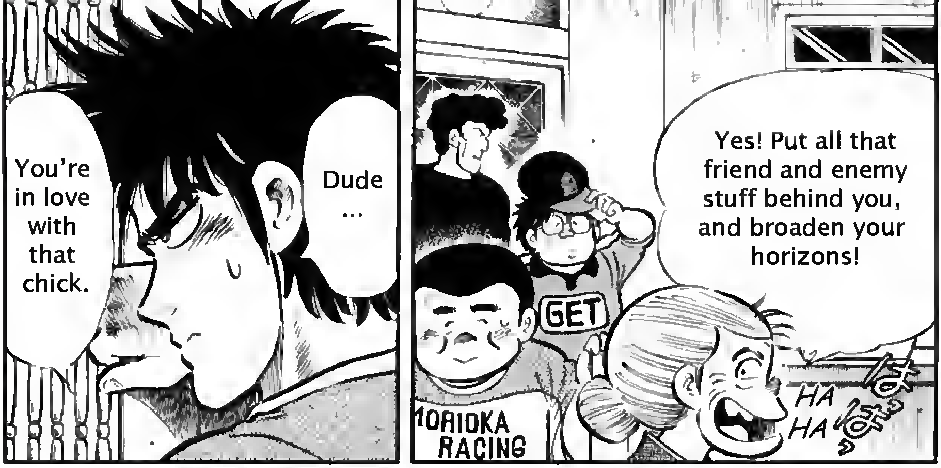
You'd think you'd tell a close friend like me that you got a girlfriend.
But still, it was pretty cold of you!
At least some sort of hint.
Doesn't matter to me what kinda women you're playin' around with! Stupid!
Tsh! No!
MORIOKA RACING TEA
A woman?
Like... to stay away from women like that who are twice as tall as you.
I coulda given you some good advice.
Gunma, that's not it.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
That was Mr. Hijiri's lady friend. Name's Ruiko.
What are you talking about?
...wo-man?
Hijiri's ...

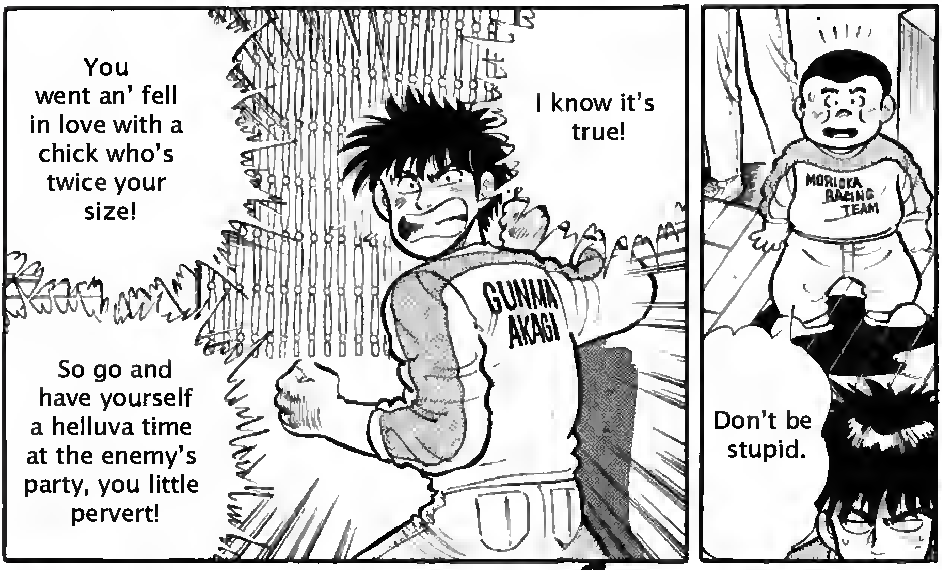
You went to Hijiri's place to hang out!?
Yup. Just once.
Hijiri kept inviting me to his place when he called, so I went over there once.
She was there too, and she said hi. But that's it.
What the hell did she want this time?
And then?
It ain't like I was keeping a secret.
I didn't know about that!
Ha!
…
VRRRR
They're gonna have a victory party for Mr. Hijiri tomorrow night, and she invited me.
She said a lot of racers and people from the racing world are gonna be there,so it would be a great opportunity.


Guess I'll take a bath.
Granny?
Tamotsu is naive as hell, but even he should know not to celebrate with the enemy on his victory!
Right, Tamotsu?
What is Hijiri thinking?


Well, I supp-ose.
Maybe I oughta take a box of sweets.
!?
Would it be rude to go without a gift?
MORIOKA RACING TEAM

Why don't you come too?
She said a lot of people will be there. It sounds kinda interesting.
SHUNK
You're really going?
To the enemy's party?
Come on, dude.
GUNMA AKAGI


You're in love with that chick.
Dude ...
GET
MORIOKA RACING
Yes! Put all that friend and enemy stuff behind you, and broaden your horizons!
HA HA


You went an' fell in love with a chick who's twice your size!
So go and have yourself a helluva time at the enemy's party, you little pervert!
GUNMA AKAGI
I know it's true!
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
Don't be stupid.

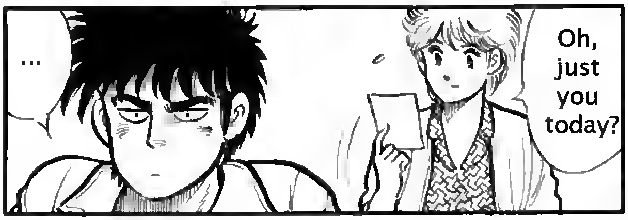
...
RATTLE
GUNMA AKAGI
I really was wrong about you!
Tamo-tsu!

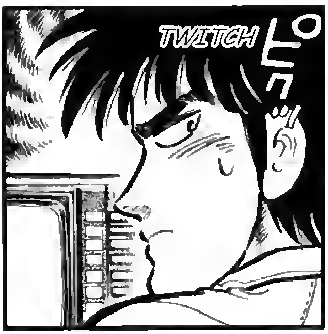
Open the door. I need to talk to you.
KNOCK
You asleep already?
KNOCK
KNOCK
Gunma.
Gunma.
KNOCK KNOCK
SNORE
Stop pretending to sleep, man.
SNORE
未木ぐんま
...
SNORT SNORT
...
SIGH
I guess he's really asleep.

PLUNK
Good work today. You can go home now.
DUNLOP
norioka mo
You two in a fight?
He hasn't said a word all day.
No, no.
HMPH
Oh, Gunma?
!?
HONK HONK
Maybe I shouldn't go after all.
Wow, thanks ...
Happened to be in the area.
Just came to give you a ride.

I'm back.
KACHUK
ZOOONE

Message
I'll be out late running errands tonight, so you'll have to make your own dinner.
- Auntie


...
Oh, just you today?


TWITCH

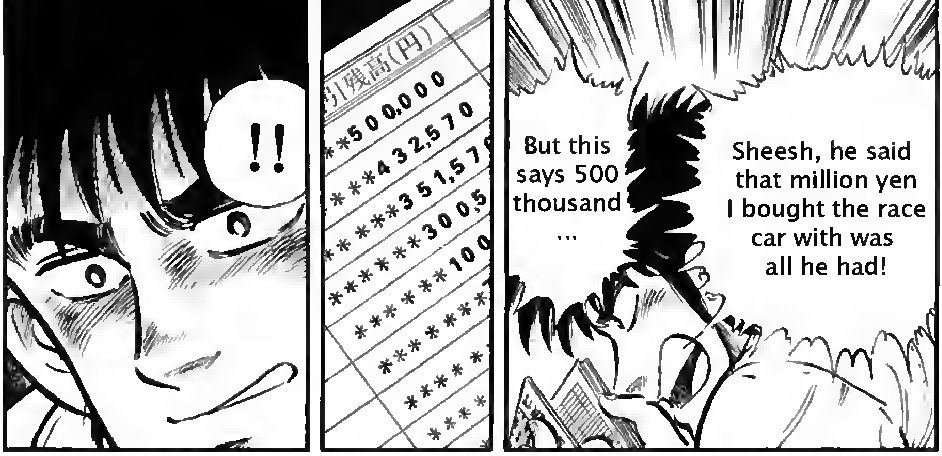
Tamotsu must be eating great at that party.
Actually Matsuura and Kinoshita said they'd be late tonight too.

It'll be my treat.
Hey, how about eating out for a change?

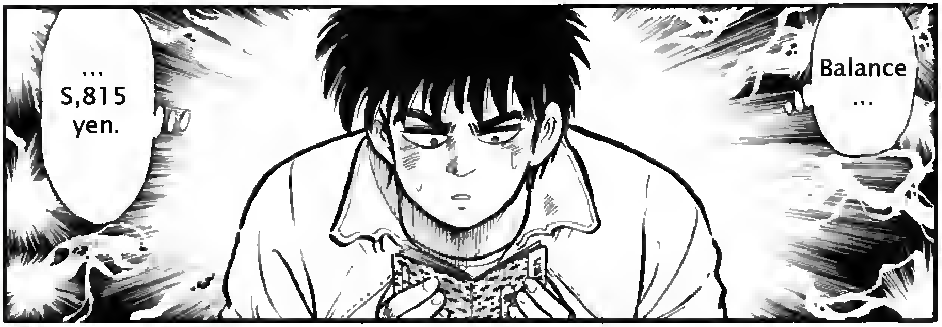
...
I guess it's just us.

'Kay?
What are you pouting for? Let's go eat.
Nah.
CLICK
!!
Dinner's on me, though!
Can't get up...
Good, it'll be fun.
Okay. Let's get goin'.
STOMP STOMP
Hold on a second!
ゼンゼン
It'd be hard to get her in bed if she pays for the meal.
Shut up.
Don't worry about it. You don't even have any money.

Tamotsu, that little devil.
I know he's got some money hidin' in here!
I said wait!
Nothin' here.
What are you doing? Come on!
SHOOP PANG
RUSTLE THUNK
CREAK
I knew it you little dog.
FLIP
Ooh, a bank book!

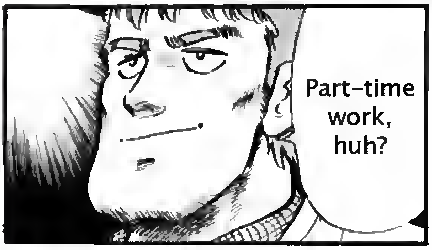


	差引残高(円)	店番
	＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊＊5,815	

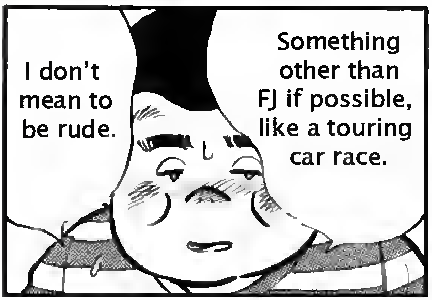


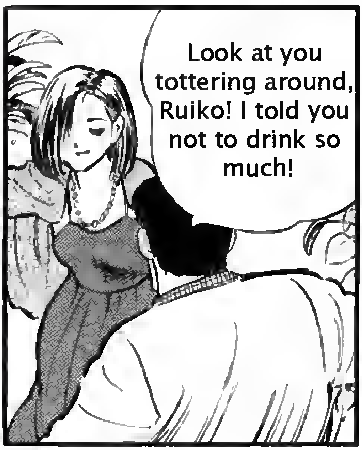
YAK
ヤッ
YAK
ヤッ
Whew, what a party.
...
ケホ
COUGH
はは
HA HA HA
Sure.
Are you having fun?
Ruiko, don't drink too much!
Somebody get Tamotsu another drink.
SLUMP

Actually, Mr. Hijiri. I came here today to...
Thanks.
...ask you for a favor.


Part-time work, huh?

Since you're really famous in the racing world, and you said I'm a good mechanic ...
...um, I don't mean to be rude, but I'm wonderin' if you could find somebody who I could work part-time for.


Something other than FJ if possible, like a touring car race.
I don't mean to be rude.

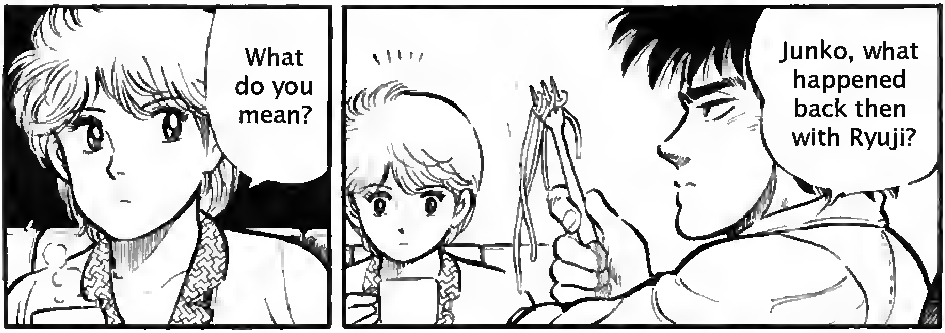

Look at you tottering around, Ruiko! I told you not to drink so much!

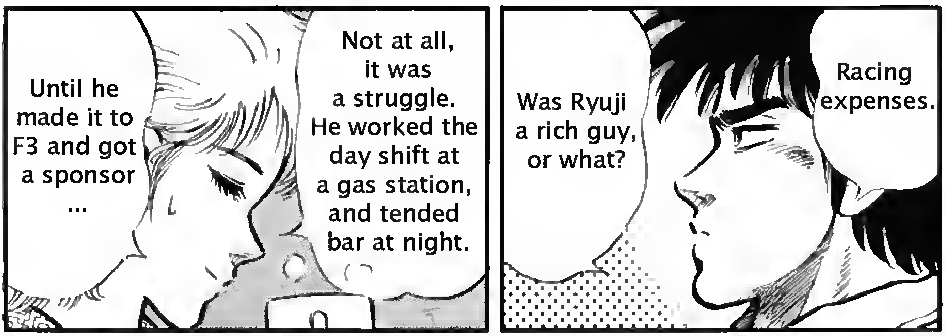
Huh?
Really?

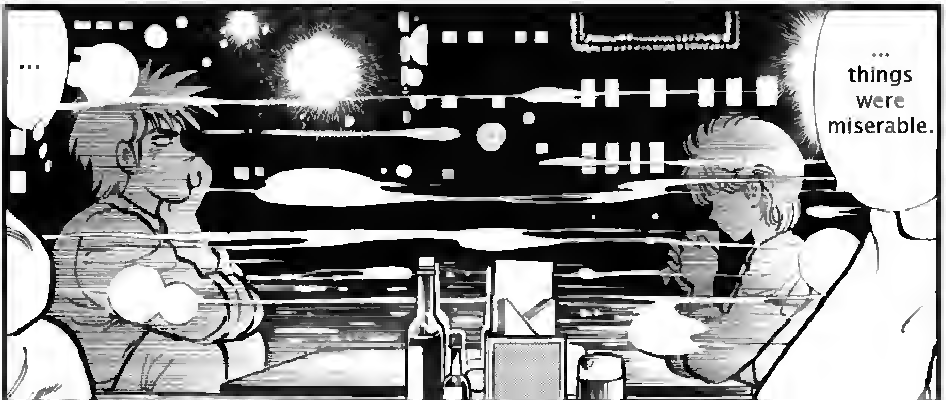
No problem. I'll find something for you.

WOBBLE
WOBBLE
Actually, Tamotsu. I was hoping you could work on my car!
Just can't.
I can't do that.
Go sleep it off in my garage.
Ungh ... A little.
What's wrong, Ruiko? Feeling sick?
Okay.
...
It's not far from here, and there's a bed.
Tamotsu, can you take her for me?

Didn't I tell you not to order spaghetti after eating that Salisbury steak, plus curry and rice?
I ain't hungry.
You haven't touched your food.
Denny's


What do you mean?
Junko, what happened back then with Ryuji?


Until he made it to F3 and got a sponsor ...
Not at all, it was a struggle. He worked the day shift at a gas station, and tended bar at night.
Was Ryuji a rich guy, or what?
Racing expenses.


...
... things were miserable.

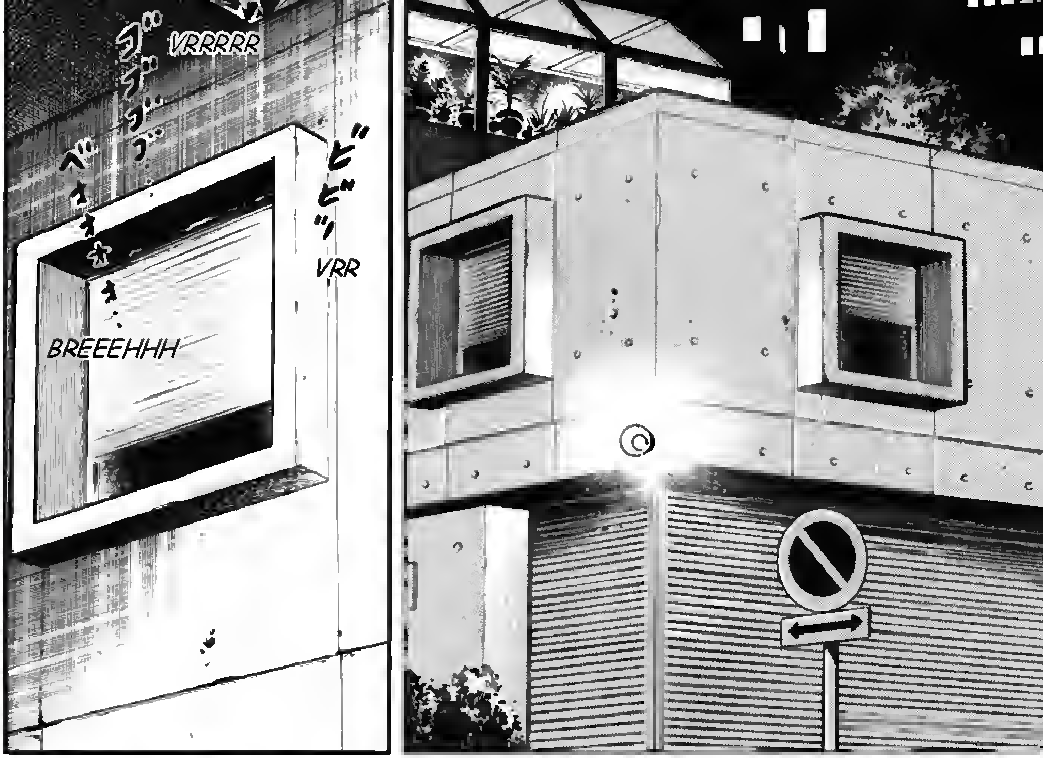
Watch your step.
Almost there.
Hang in there.
Are you okay, Ms. Ruiko?
THUMP
Whew.
I have a better idea.
I don't need water.
I'll get you some water.
I feel awful.

Tamotsu, will you go to the next room and start up the engine?
Wait! Um, I better get going now!
This will make me feel better.
It always makes me feel better.
If I can hear that race car's engine purring...
Okay.
Please do it!
It's fine. This entire garage is sound proof.
But... it's the middle of the night.

KAVROOOOM
CLICK
!?
VRRRRRRRR

VRRRR
Mmm, I love this sound.
Makes me feel so good.
VRRRRR
You know what?
Let's do it.
RR
...
VROOOOOOOH

Chapter 4:
Decisions


VRRRRR
VRR
BREEEHHH

VR VR
VR VR
VRRRRR
VRRR
BREHHH

VROM
VRRROM

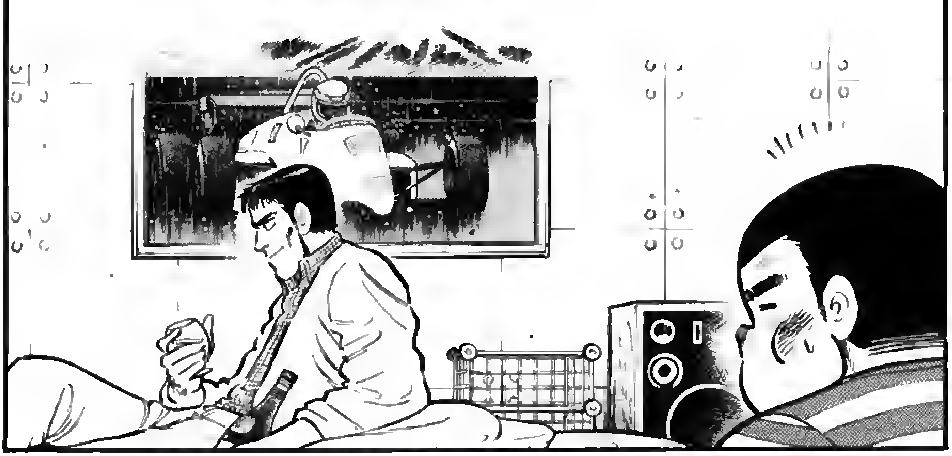
VR VR
VR VR
VR VR

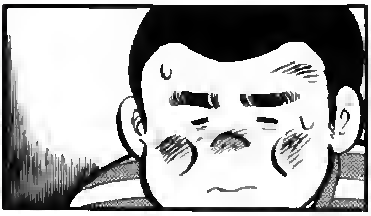
It's not vibrating enough.
Rev it up even more.
V.R.O.O.O.H.
But I, I...
Lodge this underneath to keep the gas pedal down. Please!
Don't worry. They can't hear a thing from outside.
I'll do it. Move over!

OOOH
Mmm ... Yes...
It's vibrating all the way through me.
VROOOOOOOH
Don't you wanna do it?
What's the matter?
You can do what you want to me.
Come on.

Hijiri's fine with it, you know.
There's no need to hold back. I'll blow your mind.
H-Help ...! I...
And the smell.
Mmm, I love this sound.
I... I'm...
...my whole body is gonna blow to pieces...
I feel like...
I don't wanna hit a woman.
SHOVE
L-Let go.

!
Stop sayin' all those dirty things, otherwise I gotta hit you.
So let go of me!
CLICK
I'm sorry.
Didn't mean to embarrass you like this.
...
KACHUK
Get off your high horse!
You stupid hillbilly!



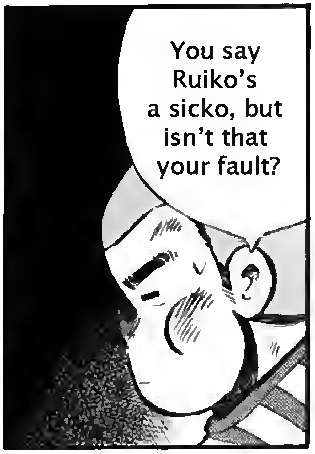


Don't worry about Ruiko. She's kind of a sicko.
Sorry about that.

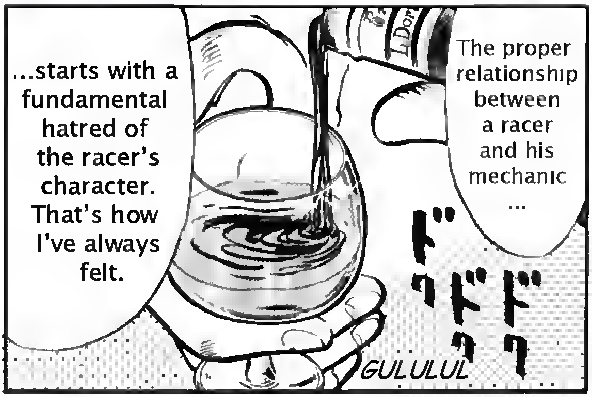
The party's over now so we can relax and chat.
How about a drink to clear your mind?

I was wrong about you.
Mr. Hijiri...

...


You say Ruiko's a sicko, but isn't that your fault?

Wrong about me, huh?
...


...starts with a fundamental hatred of the racer's character. That's how I've always felt.
The proper relationship between a racer and his mechanic ...
GULULUL

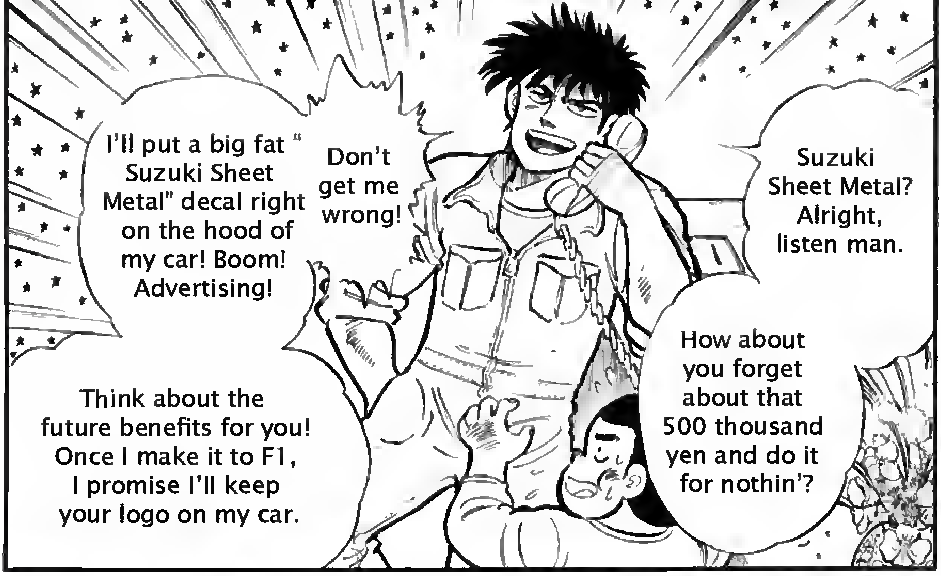
POP
I'm glad to hear that.

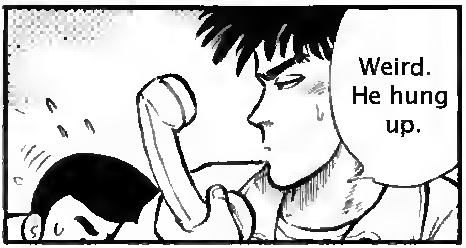
If you loosen a single screw on that car, it could be my last day alive.
But one screw tightened just right, can lead to heaven on earth.

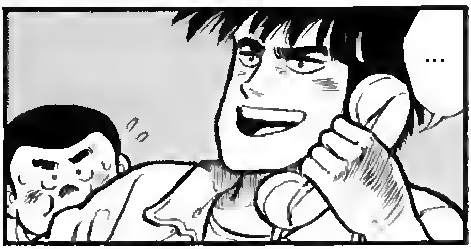
...to a great start between us!
How about a toast...

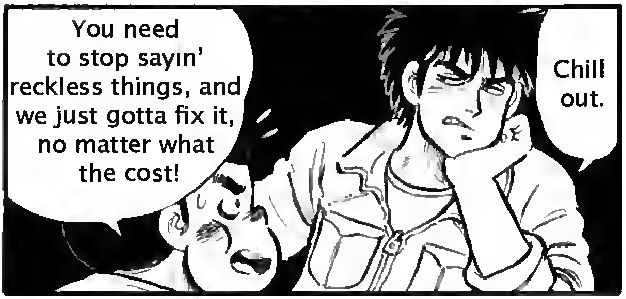
I can pay whatever you need.
Let me know if you change your mind.
No one would blame you for toying with my life.
I'm rotten to the core, with a lot of time and a lot of money, and racing is the only thing left that excites me.
And if you change your mind about Ruiko...
Oh yeah.
...have at her.
KUCHANK
Yuck.

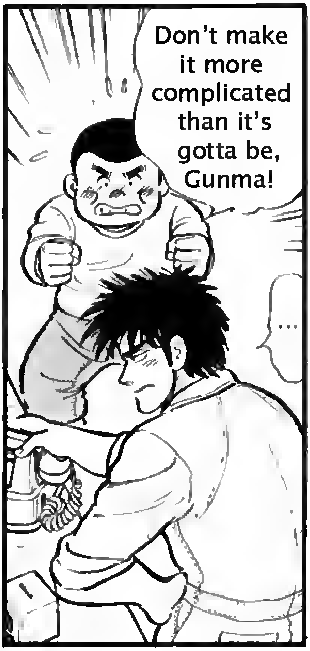
F... 500 thousand?
... which would come to about 200 thousand yen, right?
The main frame is totaled too...
TWEET TWEET
CHIRP
CHIRP
No, no. I need you to fix it, but 500 thousand yen?
500 thousand yen for that?
YAWN
Oh, you're the one who crashed that Bellco.
Yo! Who's this?
Me? This is Gunma Akagi! Professional racer, my man!
Hey...
Gimme that.

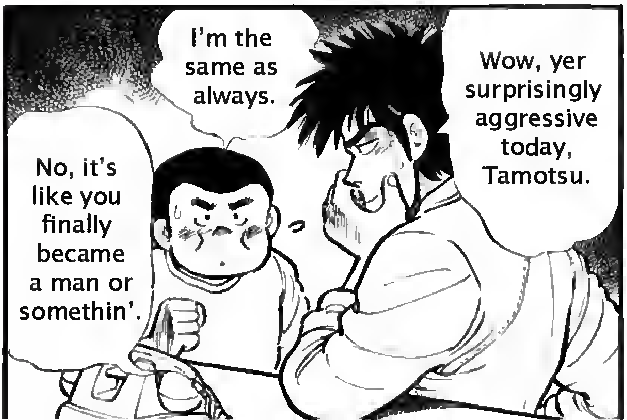

I'll put a big fat "Suzuki Sheet Metal" decal right on the hood of my car! Boom! Advertising!
Don't get me wrong!
Suzuki Sheet Metal? Alright, listen man.
How about you forget about that 500 thousand yen and do it for nothin'?
Think about the future benefits for you! Once I make it to F1, I promise I'll keep your logo on my car.


Weird. He hung up.


...


You need to stop sayin' reckless things, and we just gotta fix it, no matter what the cost!
Chill out.


Don't make it more complicated than it's gotta be, Gunma!
...

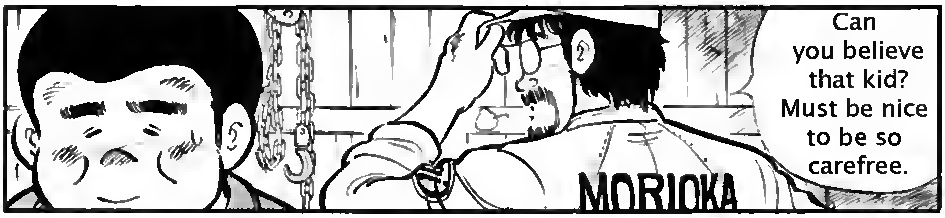

I'm the same as always.
Wow, yer surprisingly aggressive today, Tamotsu.
No, it's like you finally became a man or somethin'.

Huh?
Heh heh! That's it, ain't it? You became a man, you sly dog!
Lost your boyhood at last night's party!
SNAP
That's ...
Sure you didn't! That hot chick was on you like a blanket, and you didn't do nothin'!
SNIFF SNIFF
I can smell it all over you. That's the smell of a woman.
Don't be stupid! I didn't do nothin'!
Things just got a little weird. Ain't nothin' about becoming no man.
I'd be lyin' if I said I nothin' happened at all.
Arrgh!
Your little wormy found a hole!
Aha! I knew something happened!
GRAB

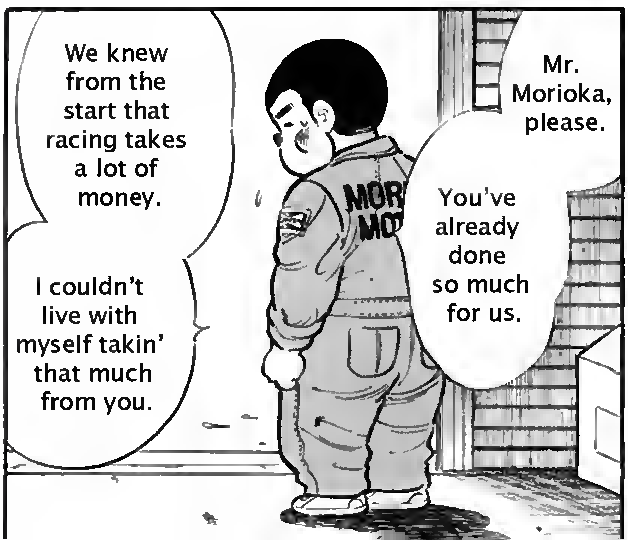
I mean, come on!
Som-eone's watching us!
URGH
With this little tool of yours!
You did the nasty, didn't you!
もみ
もみ
もみ
もみ
もみ
もみ
SQUISH
SQUISH
SQUISH
Stop it, Gunma! Yer creepin' me out!
わーっ
Waaah!
バカ
BAM
You're the one creepin' me out with your sissy talk!
W-WAAH
あぁ
あぁ
あぁ
SNIFF
SNIFF
Tsh.

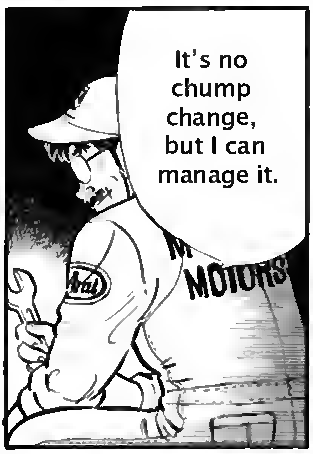
The train only takes about 10 minutes to go the same distance.
If I was pressed for time, I'd be tempted to ask for my money back.
The other day I took one from Shibuya to Shinjuku ..
...and the traffic had me stuck in that thing for 50 minutes!
I'll tell you what.
No way I wanna ride through the city in a taxi.
The train's the way to go in the city.
But on the other hand, if they get me there earlier than expected, I'd show my appreciation with a tip.
MORIOKA MOTORS
THUNK
Thanks again.
DUNLOP
Dum dah dum
But that's a lot of walking. An old man like me gets tired walking up and down those stairs at the station.
HA HA HA

Not exactly.
You guys still haven't made up?
He thinks I was with a woman the other night, and he's in a huff about it.
Pachinko sounds good right about now.


MORIOKA
Can you believe that kid? Must be nice to be so carefree.

I can loan you the 500 thousand.
By the way, Tamotsu.


We knew from the start that racing takes a lot of money.
I couldn't live with myself takin' that much from you.
Mr. Morioka, please.
You've already done so much for us.


It's no chump change, but I can manage it.

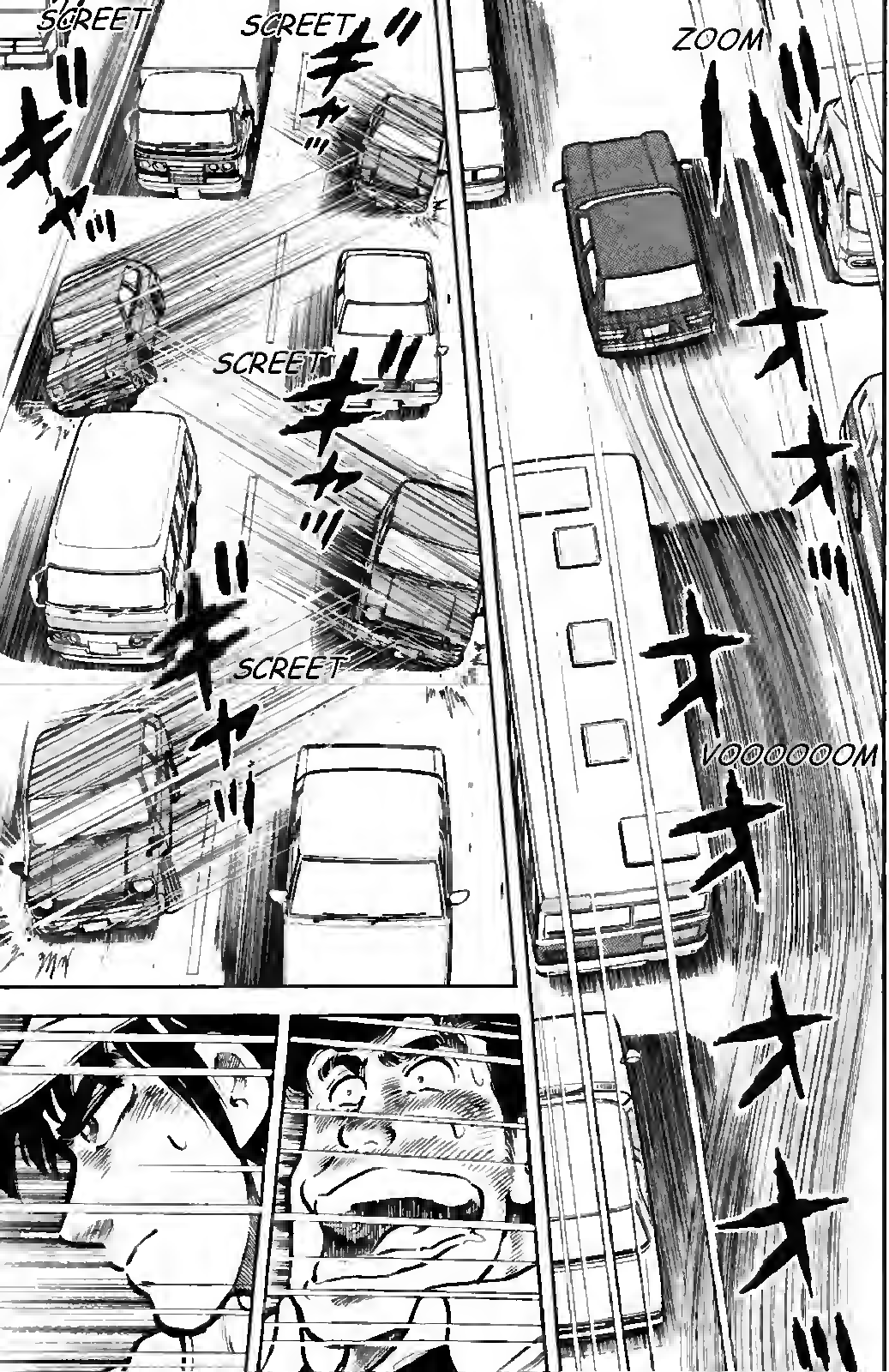
Phew ...
500 thou-sand yen.
Well, no. But we'll find a way.
But do you have any way to get the money?
CLAP CLAP
パン パン
Oh, that Gunma... He took Matsuura's car out for a drive.
Yeah.
Hello. Working overtime again?
Okay? ちぃか
はっは HA HA HA
Just pay it when you start winning!
No problem at all. I know how you've been struggling with everything.
Granny, I hate to ask this. But could you wait a little for this month's rent?
KUCHANK
Nothing to worry about.
BOW

He can't even get any practice in now.
Poor Gunma.
KACHUK
...my responsibility!
This is...
I can pay whatever you need.
Let me know if you change your mind.

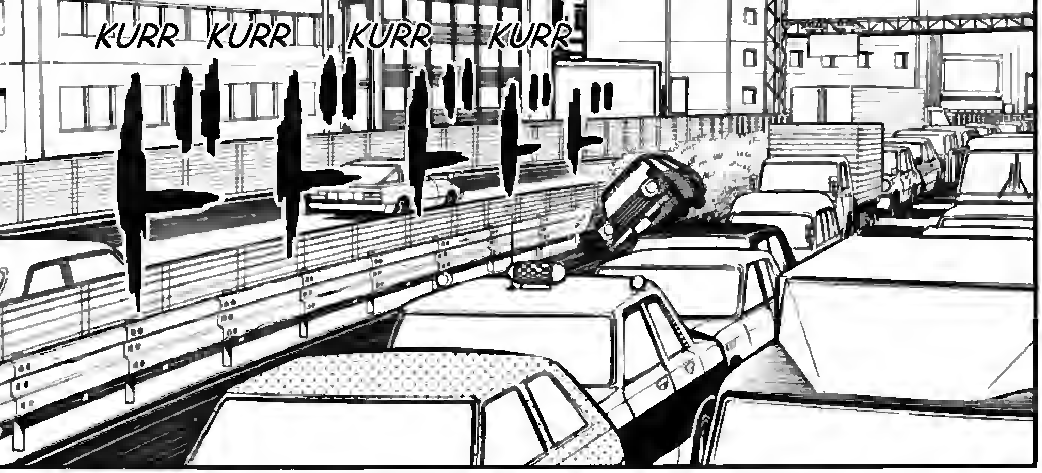
Taxi!
Taxi!
Weekly Magazine
109
Why now of all times?
I'll never make it!
What's the matter, pops? Need a ride?
Really!?
Akemi must be fuming!
Please don't leave without me!
But it's hopeless. There's no way you could get there in 15 minutes.
Piece o' cake.
RRRR
SHOOM

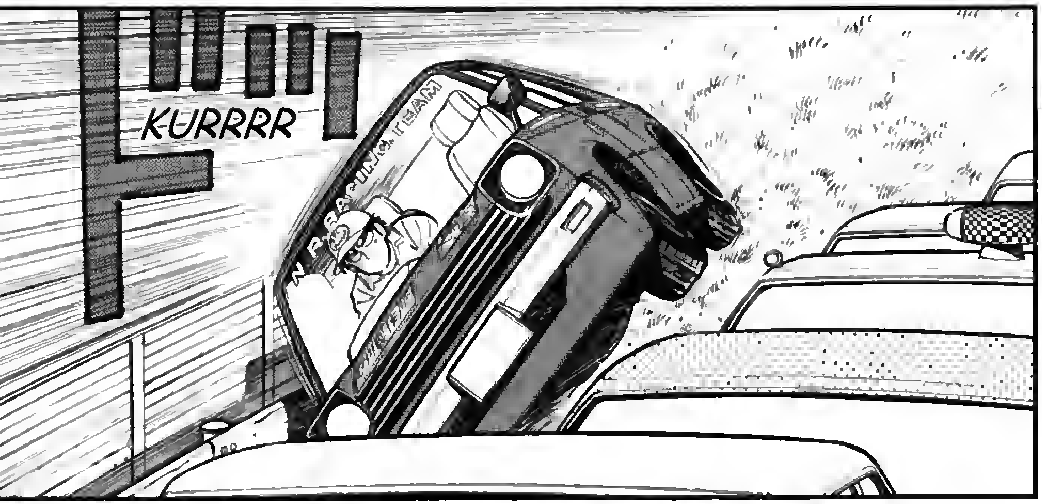
Ten times the regular taxi fare!
But it'll cost ya.
VRRR
So get going!
SLAM
What are you, some kinda black market taxi!?
I doesn't matter. If you get me there in 15 minutes, I'll pay whatever you want!
And boy is she fussy.
I've got a mistress named Akemi.
DUNLOP
Nice and tight so you don't lose your lunch!
Sit back and shut yer yapper!
But she's a stickler when it comes to time. One minute late, and she'll go without me.
We planned a secret getaway at the Kyushu Hot Springs.

ZOOOOOOOOOOM!!
キャ!!
あぁぁ


SCREET
SCREET
SCREET
SCREET
ZOOM
VOOOOOOM

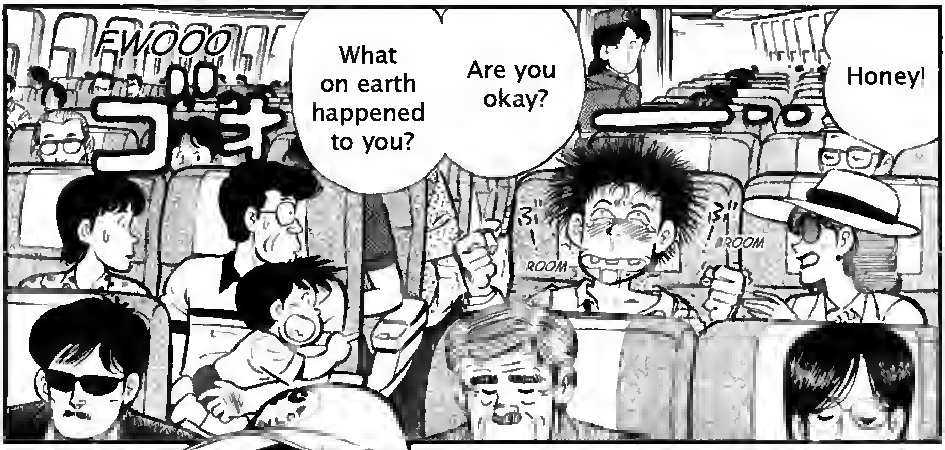
ZOOM
料金所
Toll Booth
SCREETCH
KURRT
I'll earn the money we need.
ZOOM
Heh heh! You just sit tight, Tamotsu!
500 thousand, even a million!
羽田方面
To Haneda:
Traffic Jam
5 KM
HEART
POP
KURR
KURR
KURR
KURR

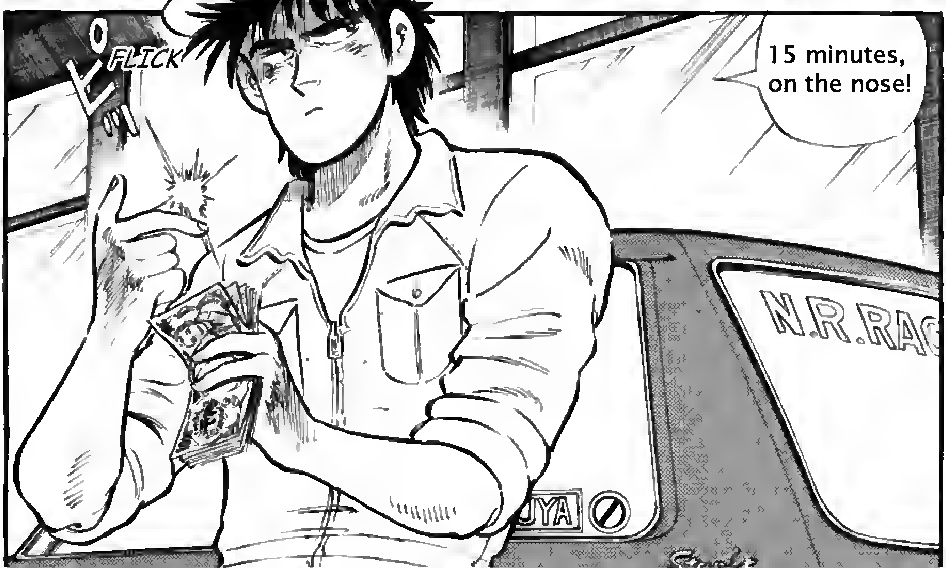

KURR KURR KURR KURR


KURRRR
NERIMA JUNIOR TEAM

Shogakukan School

JAPAN AIR LIN
キイイイー
FWEEEEEN

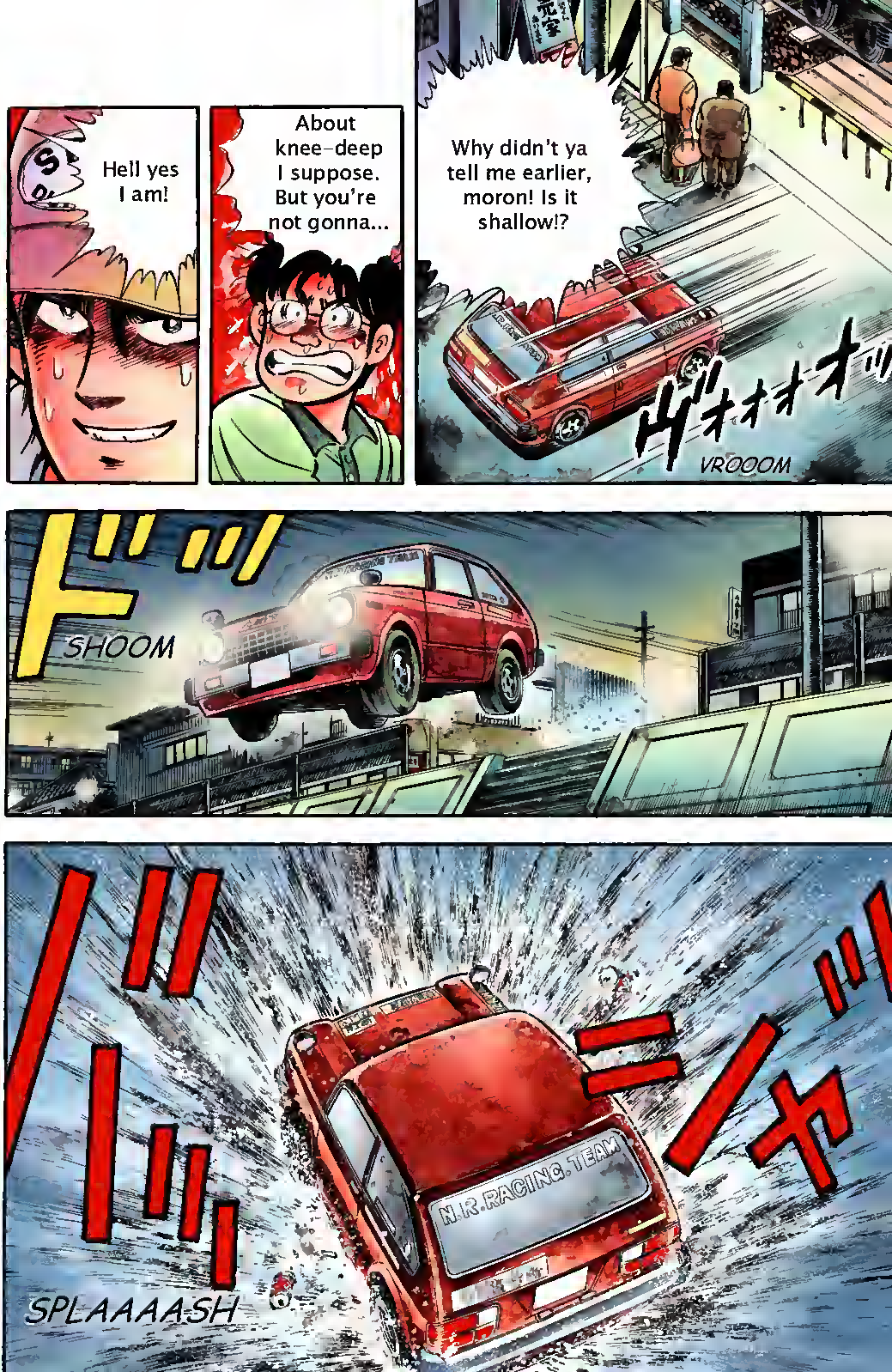

FWOOO
ゴオ
What on earth happened to you?
Are you okay?
Honey!
3'
ROOM
3'
ROOM


FLICK
15 minutes, on the nose!
N.R.RA
JYA

Chapter 5:
Expenses

HONK
DING
DING
DING
HOOONK
535
東京
SHOOOOOH
You promised you'd get us there five times faster than a regular taxi!
Can't you go any faster!?
N.R. RACING TEAM
Nakagawa Mfg.

DING
DING
DING
Just hang in there, honey!
Do something, kid!
It's coming out!
This crossing gate doesn't open for 10 minutes at this hour! Do something!
I can't hold it any longer!
Damn, another train?
CLICK
A ditch?
There's no other way! Just a ditch running under the tracks a little ways down! Dammit!
Ain't there another road!? Maybe one goin' under the tracks!?
It's coming! It's coming!


Hell yes I am!
About knee-deep I suppose. But you're not gonna...
Why didn't ya tell me earlier, moron! Is it shallow!?
VROOOM
SHOOM
N.R.RACING TEAM
SPLAAAASH

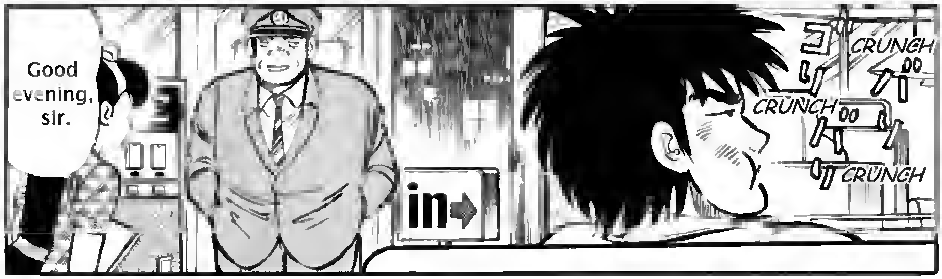
KURR
KURR
KURR
KURR
ZOOOOOOM
NISHIYAMA OB/GYN
西山産婦
Wah Wah
Wahhh...

Hey, pops.
Look at that manly face, just like his daddy! Ha ha ha.
WAH
Just in the nick of time.
WAH
WAH
And it's all thanks to you.
Ha ha! Of course, of course!
How about some money?
LICK
...
WAH
Look at my little wiggle worm.
WAH
WAH
WAH
He's letting us know how happy he is to be born!
DUNLOP

Hey big daddy.
Take a chance on me. I'll get you there fast.
Excuse me, ma'am! Might I interest you in a ride?
I'll get you there five times faster than any of these taxis, for only twice he cost!
SQUEAK
...
I'm not in a hurry.
I'm being completely honest, and it'll only cost ya three times as much!
Contact all the drivers in the area, right now.
This is No. 6.
I found that punk who's been working our territory.

Good evening, sir.
WHIRL WHIRL
A measly 100 thousand yen for a week's work.
At this rate, we won't make it to the next race.
Tsh.
VRRRR

がぱっ
GLUG
This sucks.
Even if Morioka pays me and Tamotsu in advance, it still ain't enough.
ドズッ
THUMP


Good evening, sir.
in
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

Maybe he's actually working a job.
Last night he came back past midnight.
What's gotten into that Gunma? He's been out every night.
I know it sounds crazy, but he was asking me about racing expenses...
mellow
You think so?
It wasn't like him.
He asked me about Ryuji and how we paid for his racing. Said it must've been hard.
FSSHHH
Racing expenses? What about 'em?
Oh, hello.
What could he be up to?
...

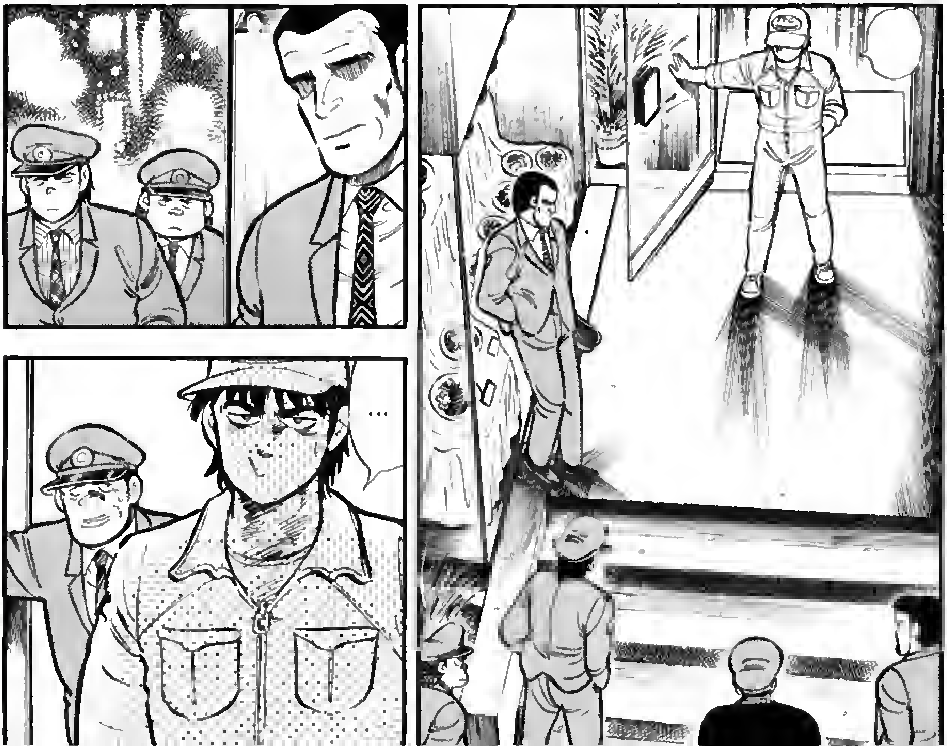
?
I need you to step outside, kid.

...
...

What are you, some kinda gangster?
I'm tellin' you to step out front.
...

お会計
SLIP
...
Thought we could have a little chat.
You're making life difficult for us.

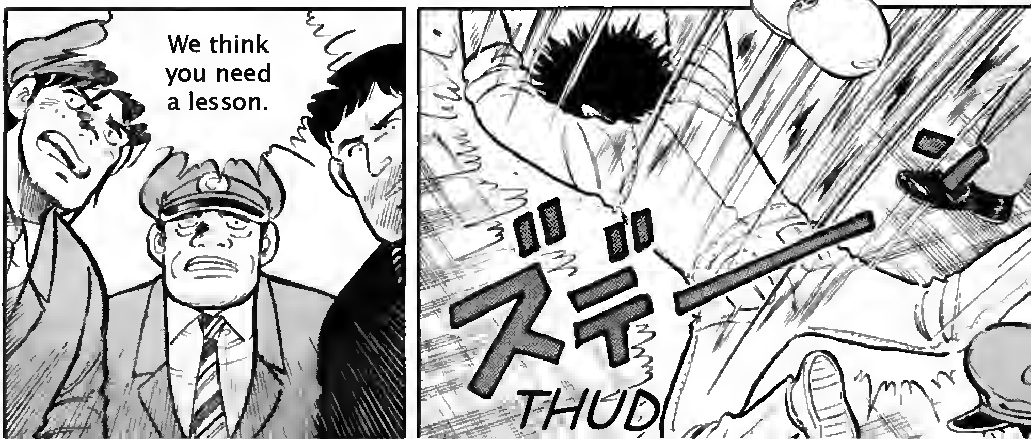
So that's altoge-ther.
Take care of this, will ya?
If you insist.

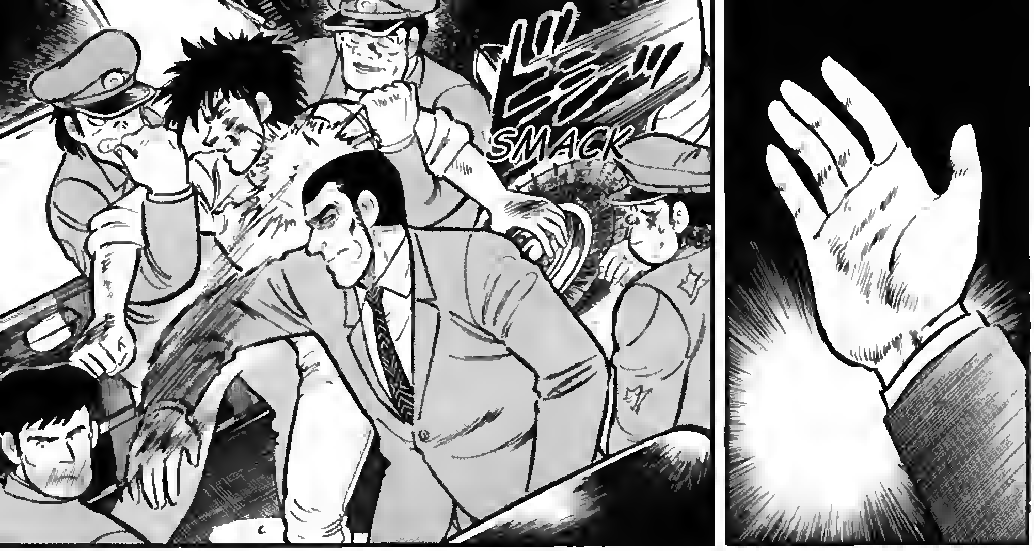

...

SPC
DUNLOP

Each cab company has their own territory to cover, and you don't even have a Class 2 license.
We had to resolve a little work-related issue.
What did you do to my car?

What the hell do you think yer...


We think you need a lesson.
ズテ
THUD


SMACK

We thought of bringing in the cops, but you've got a future to worry about.

Sometimes a little pain gets the point across better than anything.
BAM

And a little ignorant of how the world works.
BLAM

Hey ...
SWIFF
Give it back!
You earned a pretty nice wad of cash here. We'll take it as a lesson fee.
And don't mess with our business, ever again.
What are you doin'?
Don't try it!

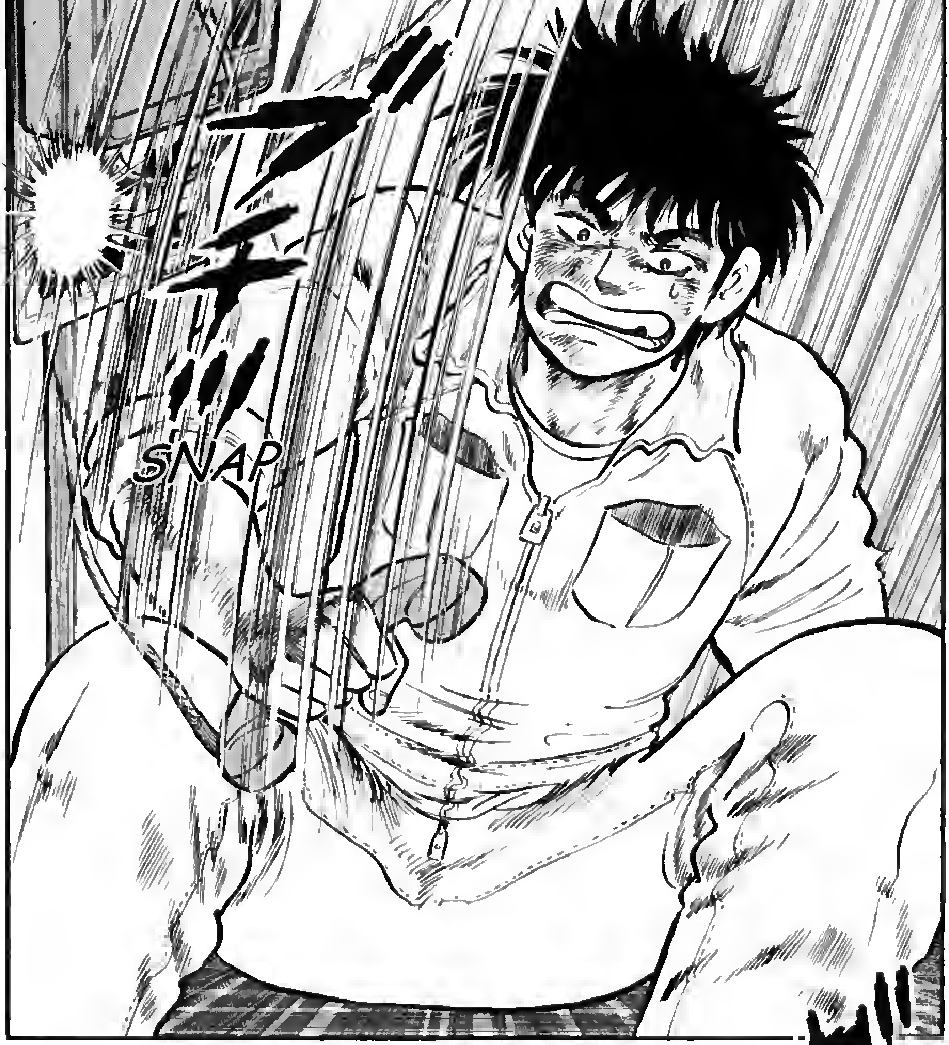
SLAM SLAM SLAM
VROOM
ドス…!
THUMP

ブゥゥ…
VRRRR
ブゥゥゥ
VRRRR
in
SAILYO

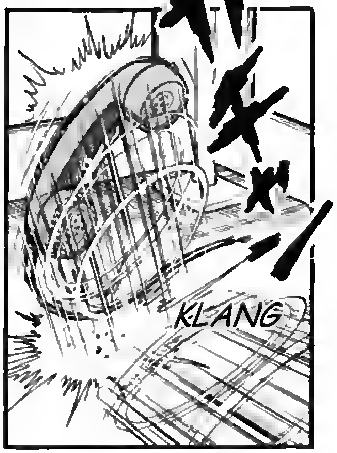
Wah!
Wah!

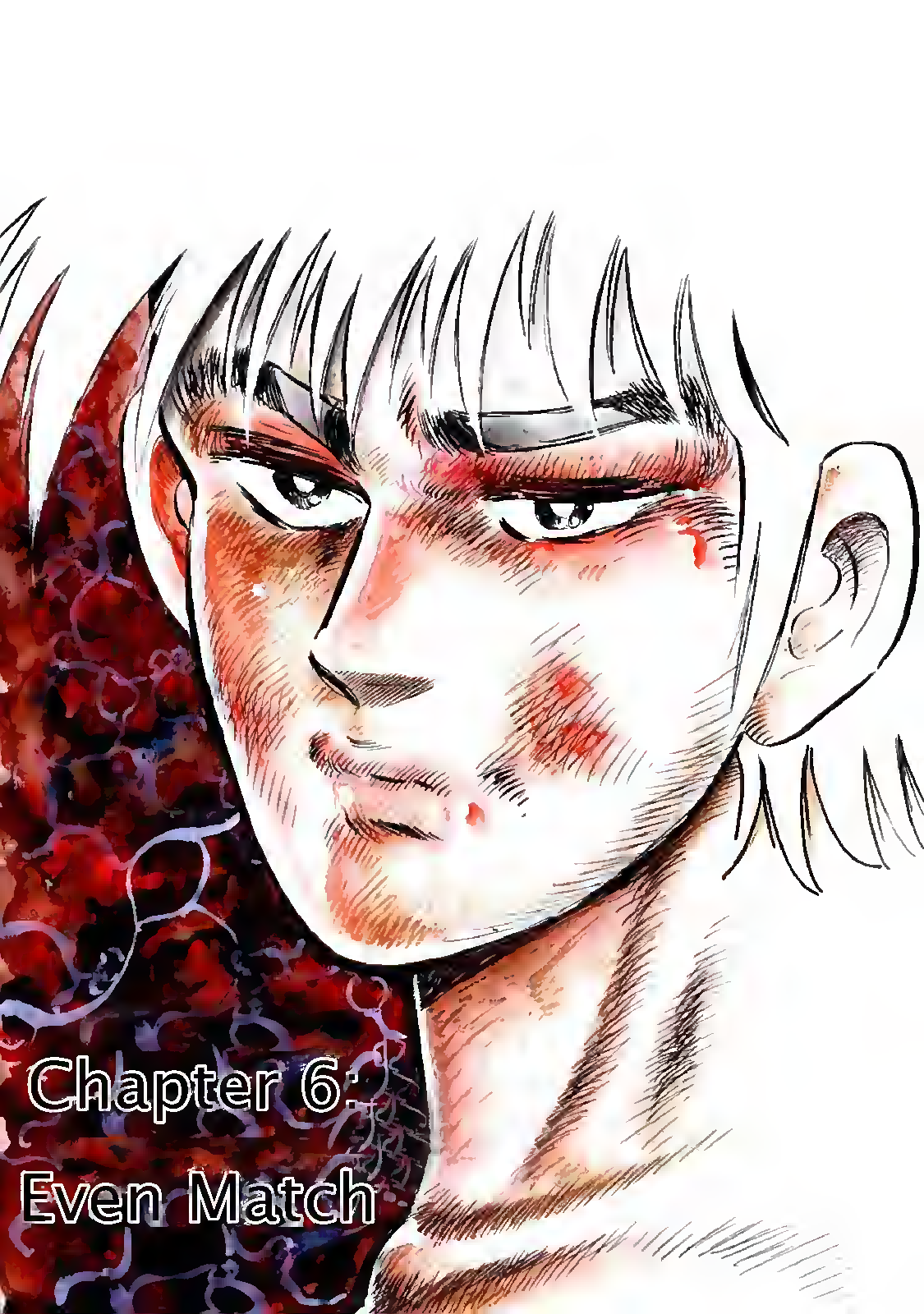
I got it taken care of.
Gunma don't have no reason to worry about racing expenses.
I'll get it. Maybe it's Gunma.
It's the phone.
RINNNNG
It's nothin', dummy.
Gunma, what happened?
Tamotsu ... glad I... caught you.
Oh, and also...
I'll be right there! Don't move!
Where are you?
Come pick me up ... I... can't move...
And the car's totaled.

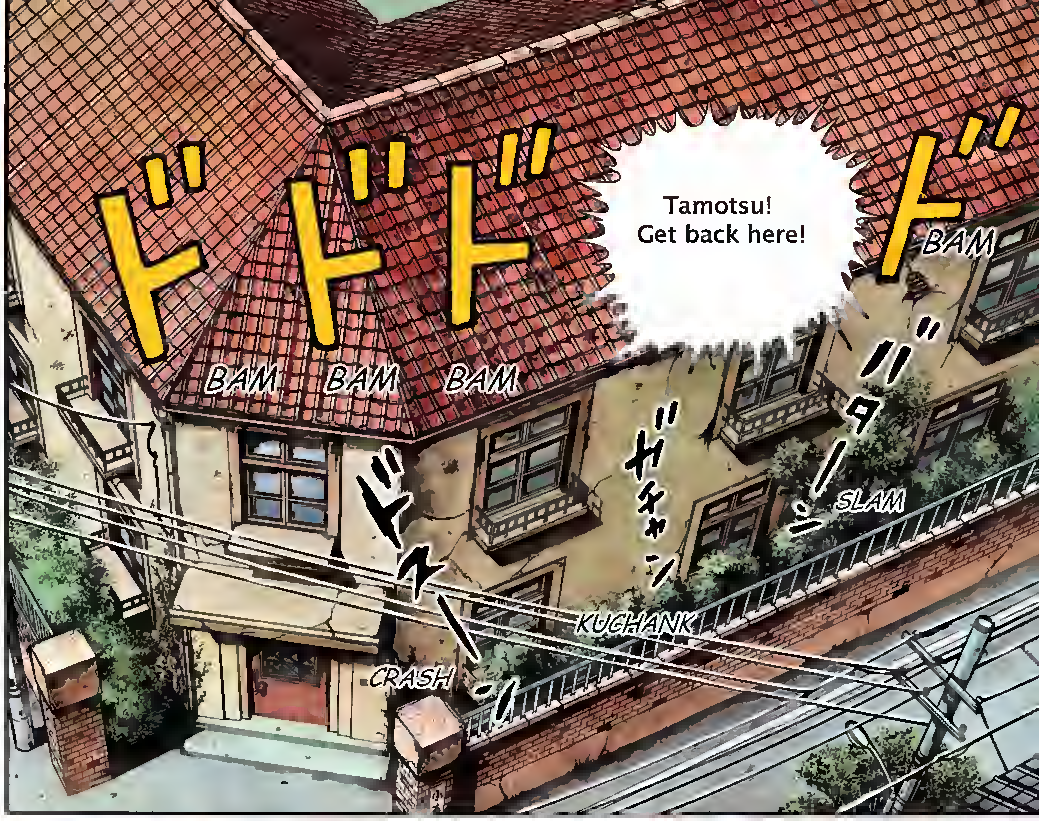
Hold on, Tamotsu.
I borrowed the money.
So you don't got nothin' to...
I got some good news. Our racing expense worries are over.
...
Hijiri, right?
We can talk about that later.
From who?
Borrowed the money?
...I'm going to work on Hijiri's race car.
Gunma, I...
Forgive me.
mellow

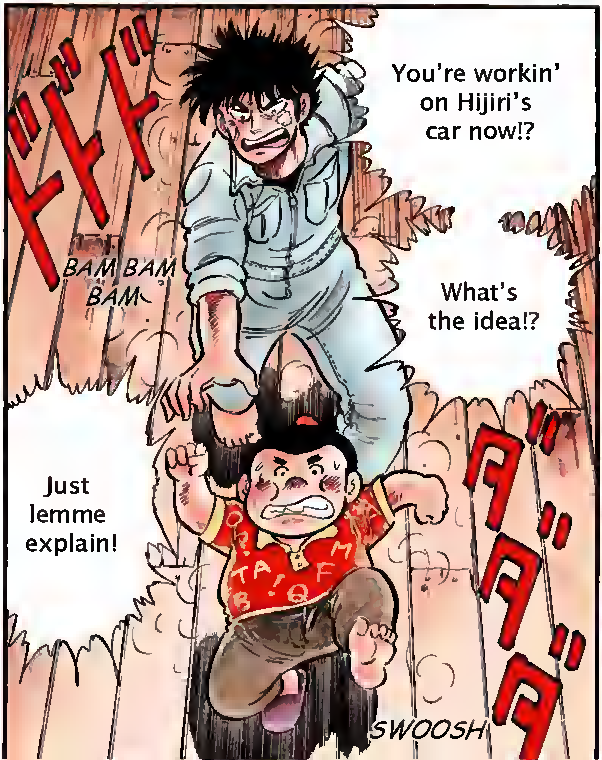

SNAP

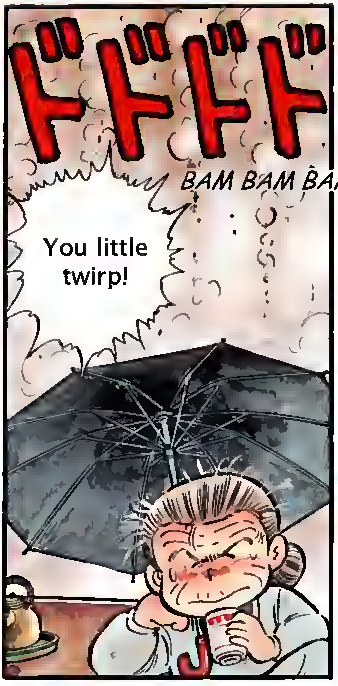
Unbeli-
evable...
BOOP
BOOP
BOOP
...


KLANG

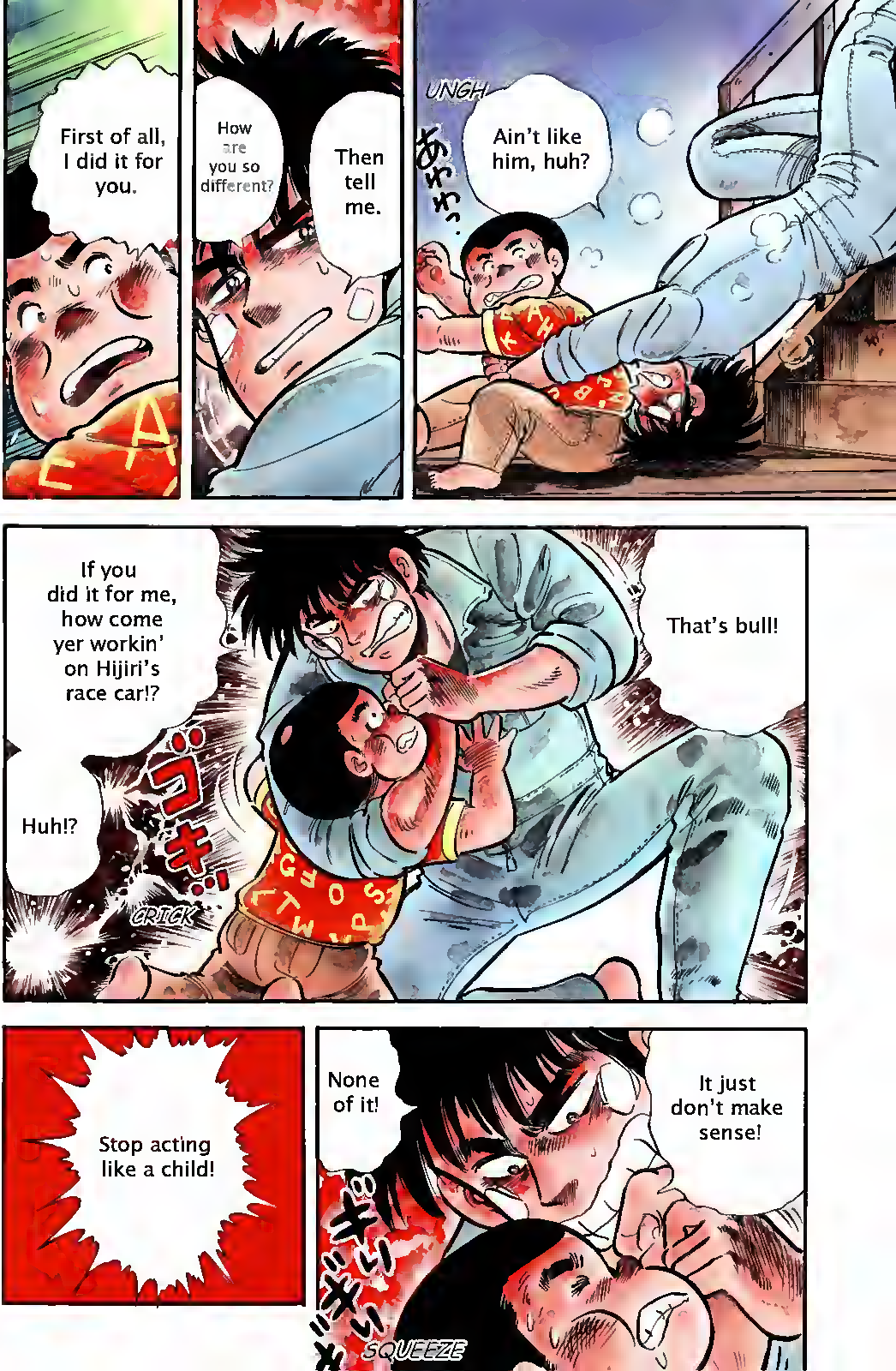

Chapter 6:
Even Match


ドドド
BAM BAM BAM
Tamotsu!
Get back here!
ドド
BAM
ダッ
SLAM
ガチャン
KUCHANK
ドン
CRASH


ドドド
BAM BAM BAM
You're workin' on Hijiri's car now!?
What's the idea!?
Just lemme explain!
ダダダ
SWOOSH


ドドドド
BAM BAM BAM
You little twirp!

BAM
You ain't got no principles!
SWOOSH
And it better be good!
I'm dyin' to hear what you got to say!
Yer the last person I thought I'd hear that from.
You ain't got no idea what friendship is, or what bonding is all about!
All you care about is yer damn machines!
ばたーん
CRASH
TUMBLE
TUMBLE
TUMBLE
SLAM
Leave my daddy outta this!
I ain't like him!
URRGH
Or did that floozy of a chick seduce you into it!?
Yer old man was into loose women too!


First of all, I did it for you.
How are you so different?
Then tell me.
UNGH
Ain't like him, huh?
If you did it for me, how come yer workin' on Hijiri's race car!?
That's bull!
Huh!?
ゴキ
CRICK
Stop acting like a child!
None of it!
It just don't make sense!
ギリギリ
SQUEEZE

What!? I ain't the one who took Hijiri's mechanic job and betrayed his friend! Don't that mean nothin'!?
Stop it! Why are you so simple-minded!?
OW OW OW
SQUEEZE
Why are you bullying Tamotsu again!?
Shut up, Junko! He fell for the charms of a floozy and betrayed me!
Let's discuss this like rational adults.
I'm sure it's all part of Tamotsu's plan.
Just stop choking him first!
...
...like adults!
Come on...
We ARE discussin' ...
TWITCH TWITCH

Mr. Hijiri told me he'd pay whatever I want if I work on his car.
But it would take second to Gunma's car of course, 'cause Gunma and me are a team.
How do I put this?

It does sound good...
Maybe too good.

Basically, we're struggling with our racing expenses.
And I thought it sounded too good to miss...
So... I took it.

Gunma, if you don't get serious, Hijiri might take Tamotsu away from us.
TWITCH

No, we can't keep living like this.
I told you not to worry about that.
POP
But we can't keep relying on all of you, and Mr. Morioka, to pay our expenses.
Plus we're behind on rent.
No no, that'll never happen.
Even though it ain't like I'm gettin' a boatload of money.
HEH HEH
I get it now. By helping Hijiri with his car, you won't have to worry about racing expenses anymore.
Ha ha ha ha!
HA HA HA
It really was good to discuss this thing rationally! I finally get what Tamotsu's trying to do!
Heh heh heh ...
Hm hm hm.

?
Two birds with one stone, baby! Heh heh!
You get a nice chunk of Hijiri's money...
...and screw with his car a little, so it runs slower than mine!
Check this out!
SWOOSH
...it's not what I was...
Gunma, that's not...
You are an evil genius, my friend!
You sly dog, you!

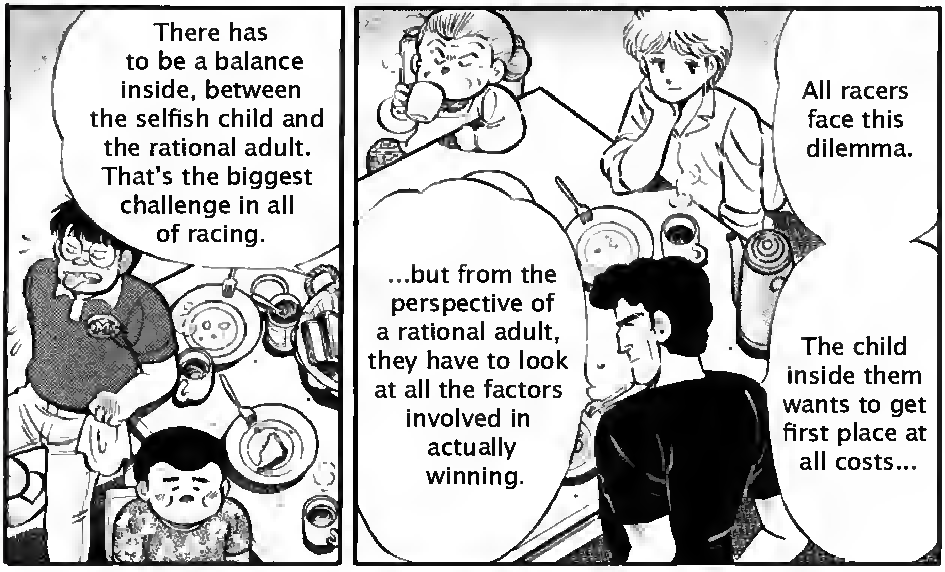
...I could never do that to nobody, even a rival.
Even though it's a temp job...
It's true that Mr. Hijiri's car is better than yours on multiple levels, bein' a new, faster model.
But I just...
I'm sorry Gunma, but I intend to get Mr. Hijiri's race car in top condition too.
What the hell is so better about it!?
But it's better like this!
Stop it, Gunma.
You ARE a traitor then!
CLATTER

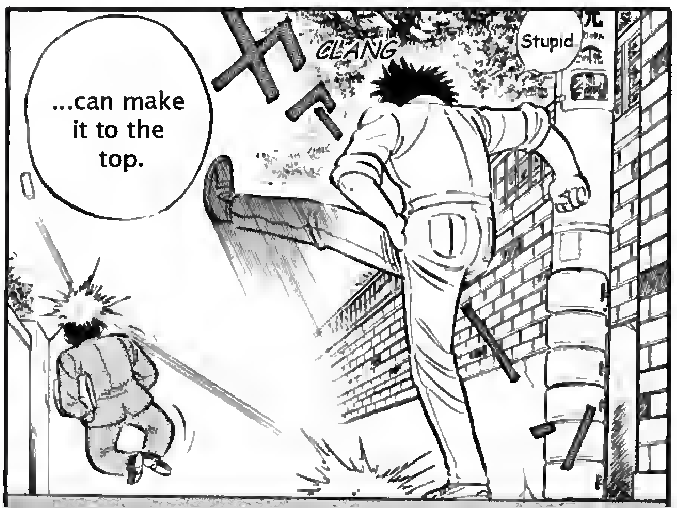
Even if we can't beat Mr. Hijiri, you can aim for the top six.
What can be "better" about Hijiri's car bein' faster than mine from the get go!? Huh!?
Seriously?
Top six?
What's most important is to stay up in the rankings, consistently!
I know how bad you wanna get first place, but that ain't what we need right now!
What we need most is to be in every race from start to finish, and stay in the top six!
Listen to me, Gunma.

Then the tire and oil companies, and others will start comin' to us, askin' us to use their products!
Everybody'll recognize "Gunma Akagi" as a solid racer.
That way you can build up your reputation, little by little.
And we can even get a new race car!
Then I don't gotta work for Hijiri no more.
...
Yes, no need to burn yourself out early.
Tamotsu's right. It makes perfect sense.
...and stay in the top six!
We just gotta finish every race...
Try to see the big picture, Gunma!
Workin' your butt off to get first from the get go will lead to an early retirement.

THUMP
The way you think ...
...makes me sick.
SLAM
Gun-ma.

He gets it, but it just makes him mad.
Nah... He gets it.
Why doesn't he get it?


There has to be a balance inside, between the selfish child and the rational adult. That's the biggest challenge in all of racing.
All racers face this dilemma.
...but from the perspective of a rational adult, they have to look at all the factors involved in actually winning.
The child inside them wants to get first place at all costs...


...can make it to the top.
CLANG
Stupid

Only the ones who figure out that perfect balance...
SUNTORY

Get away from me.
WADDLE WADDLE
Hey Gunma, maybe we oughta get some practice runs in before the next race. I wanna check over the repairs too.
WADDLE WADDLE
You got him into the race? That's great news.
Morioka Motors
And his race car is fully repaired.
Why not!?
I ain't goin'!
It's only temporary for car expenses! Just a loan!
You can't expect me to practice with Hijiri's money!
SWISH
...you gotta memorize the course so you can race even with your eyes closed. And to do that, you gotta practice.
If you really wanna win...
Don't be so stub- born. Gunma ...
SLAM

Let's get some sleep. Nothin' worse than bein' drowsy on the day of the race.
Right.

T.SUI
FJ1600-B Championship
Tickets Adult Child
(Elementary/Junior High)
FJ1600-B
選手権
入場料
大人…
小・中学
主催 … JR

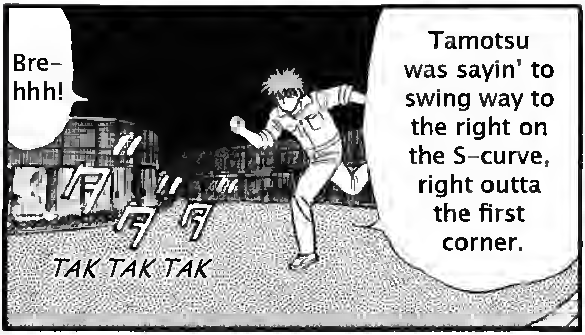
It's tomorrow... Just you wait...
Man ...

THUNK
CHING

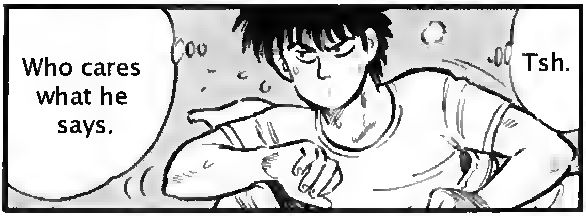
NISSAN
HUSHHH

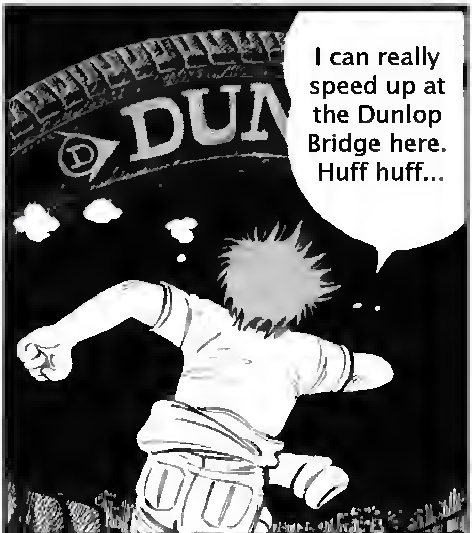
Ready, and...

FWOOSH
...GO!


Bre-hhh!
TAK TAK TAK
Tamotsu was sayin' to swing way to the right on the S-curve, right outta the first corner.

The first corner goes uphill.
TAK TAK TAK


Who cares what he says.
Tsh.


I can really speed up at the Dunlop Bridge here. Huff huff...

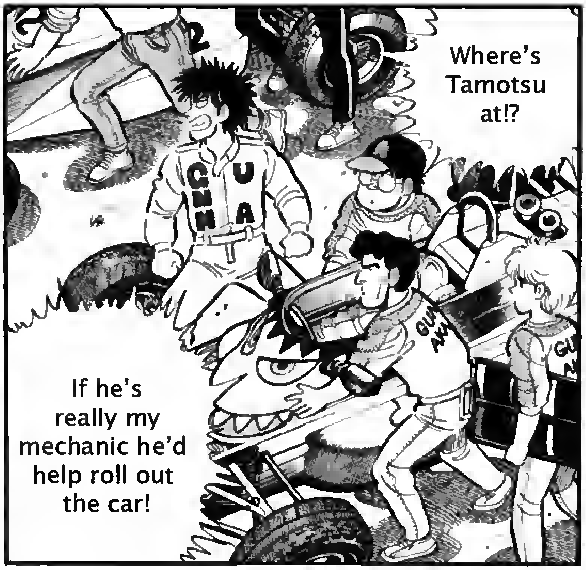
Weird, the outside is a reverse bank.
Could get nasty takin' this turn on the outside!
HUFF HUFF
Now for the first hairpin!

Next up is the straightaway, the longest stretch of he course.
TAK TAK TAK TAK
...swallow your pride and take it slow!
And now the second hairpin ...
VROOOM!
WHISH
Backs-tretch!
BAROOOOM!
BROOOOOOOM!

I'm ready.
Those other drivers won't know what hit 'em!

VROOM

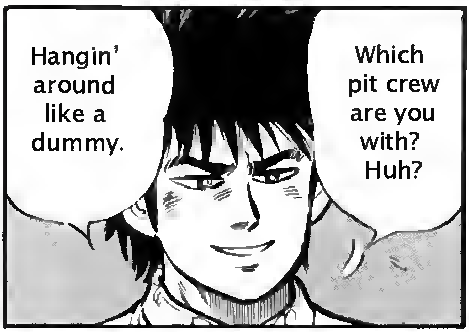
Right, let's roll it out.
Don't overreact, Gunma. We've got this.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM

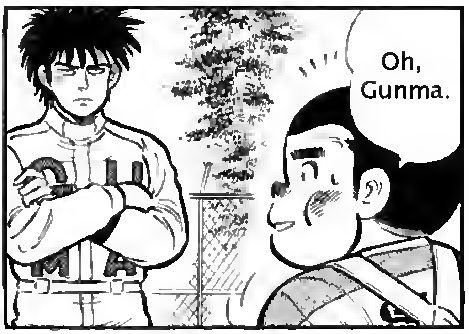

Where's Tamotsu at!?
If he's really my mechanic he'd help roll out the car!

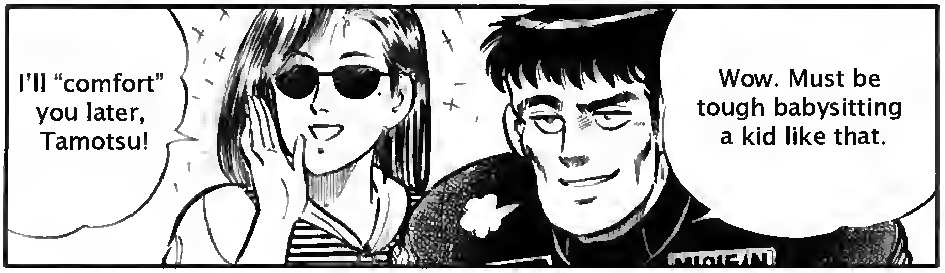
I'm getting worried.
He still doesn't have that balance.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
MORIOKA RACING TEAM

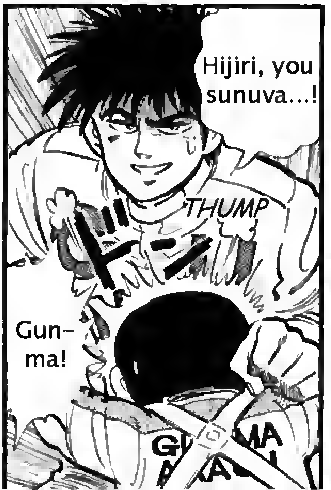
Take care of this for me!
I'll go get him.

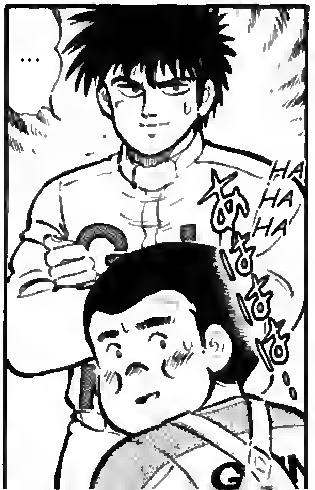
Sounds good. Take it easy.
Okay, that oughta do her. We'll see how this preliminary goes, and I'll readjust the alignment (*) if need be.







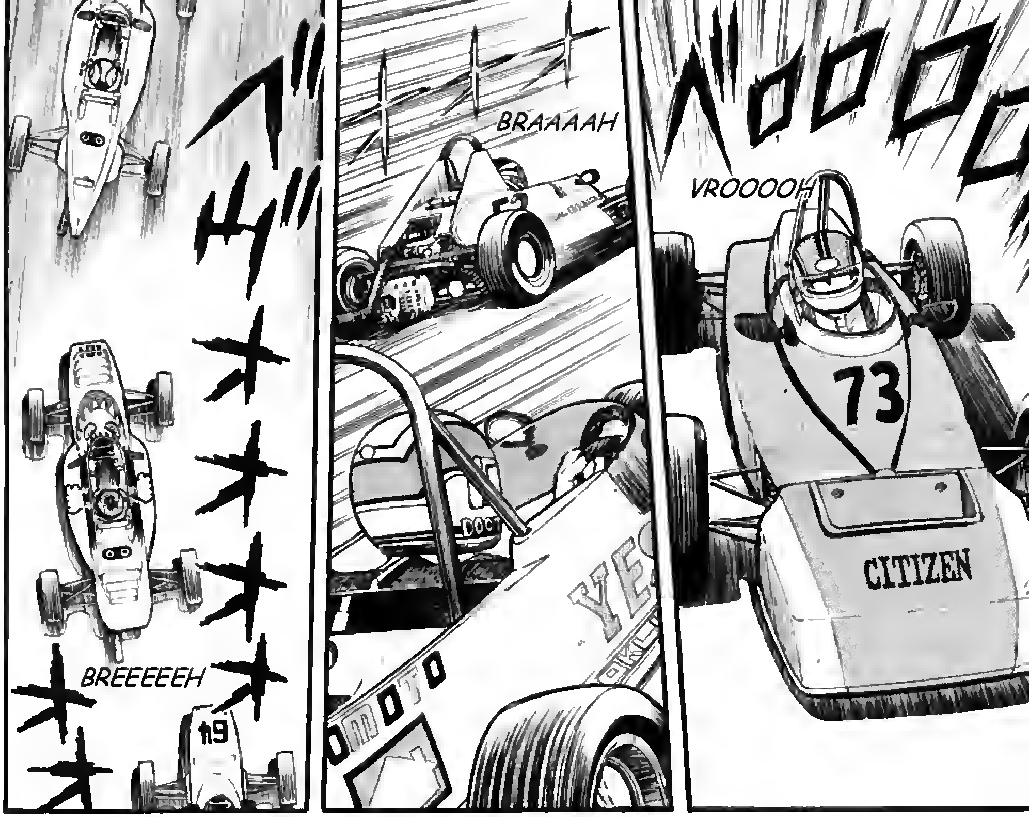




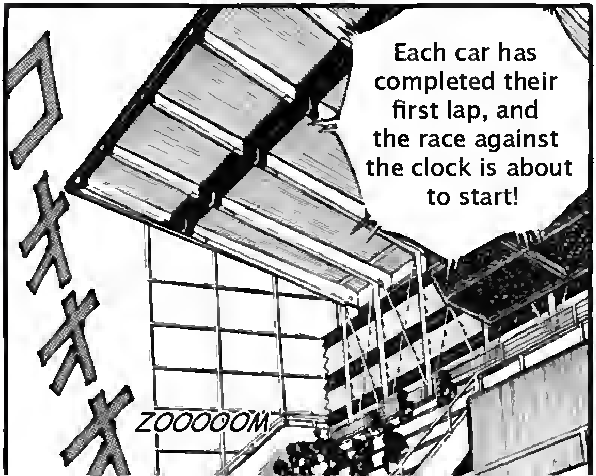
* Adjust alignment = Adjust tire balance, etc.

Our goal is sixth place, and that's that.
CHING
Be calm!
Don't get provoked, you idiot! Did you forget what I said!?
Gunma ...
Outta the way, losers!
Gun-ma!
Wait up!
VRRROOM
The FJ1600B class preliminary race is about to begin.
This will be a 15-minute race against ...
VRRROOM

VROO VROO
Gunma?
Hold on, Gunma. I wanna have another meeting before the...
BRAAN
VRRVRRVRR
VROOOM
Gunma!
VRRROOM
VROOOM
VROOOH
VROOOH
VOOOOOOM


BRAAAAH
VROOOOH
73
CITIZEN
BREEEEEH
19

Tam-
otsu.
Like he's late for work or something.
He just left us ...


Each car has completed their first lap, and the race against the clock is about to start!
ZOOOOOM

Let's just go to the pit.

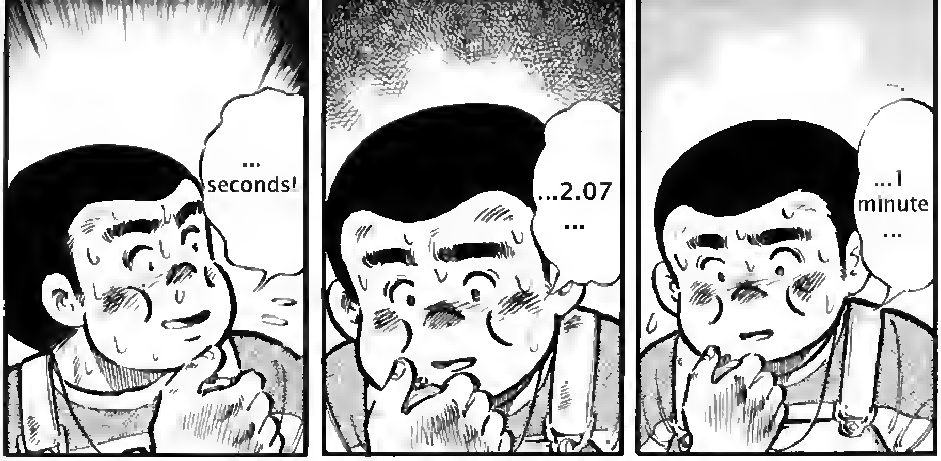
ZOOOOOOOH
K. MIHAMI
MORIOKA RACING
BRAAAAH
VOOOOOOM
1
74
ZOOOOOM
22
3
BRAAAAAH

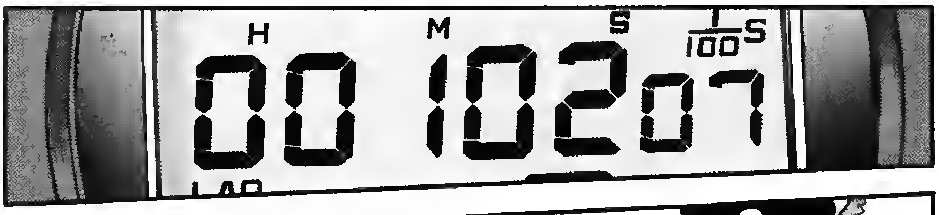
What's the time, Tamotsu?
GUN
SWOOOSH
CLICK
...
Huh?
I don't believe this. I must've messed up.
What's wrong?
Arai
I mean, Gunma's time is...

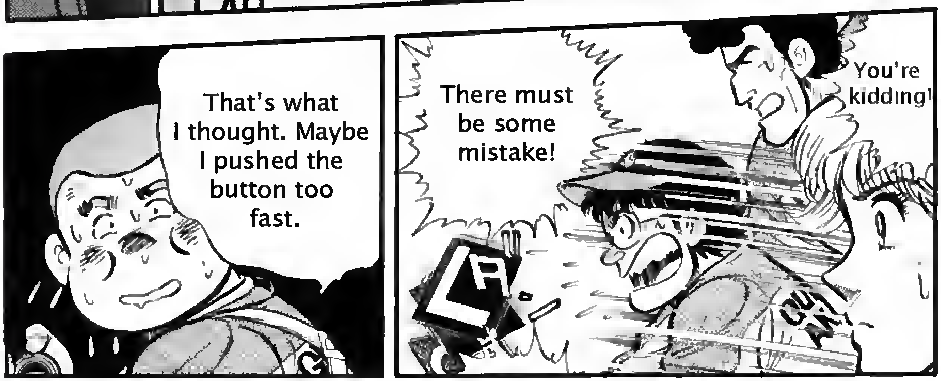
Chapter 7:
The Miracle
Arai
HELMET
MORIOKA

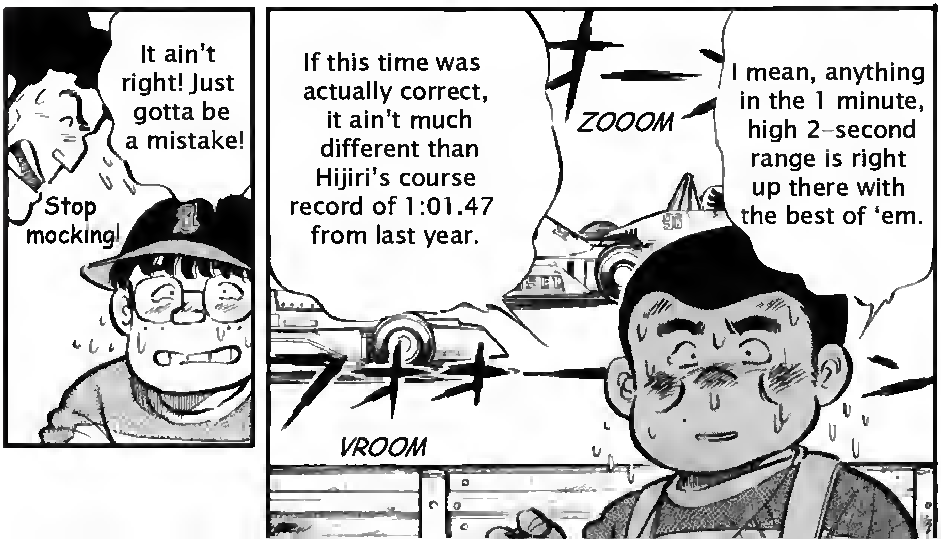
ZOOOOOM
This can't be right!
I just can't believe it!
51
101

Gunma's lap time just now...
What's wrong, Tamotsu!?
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
67

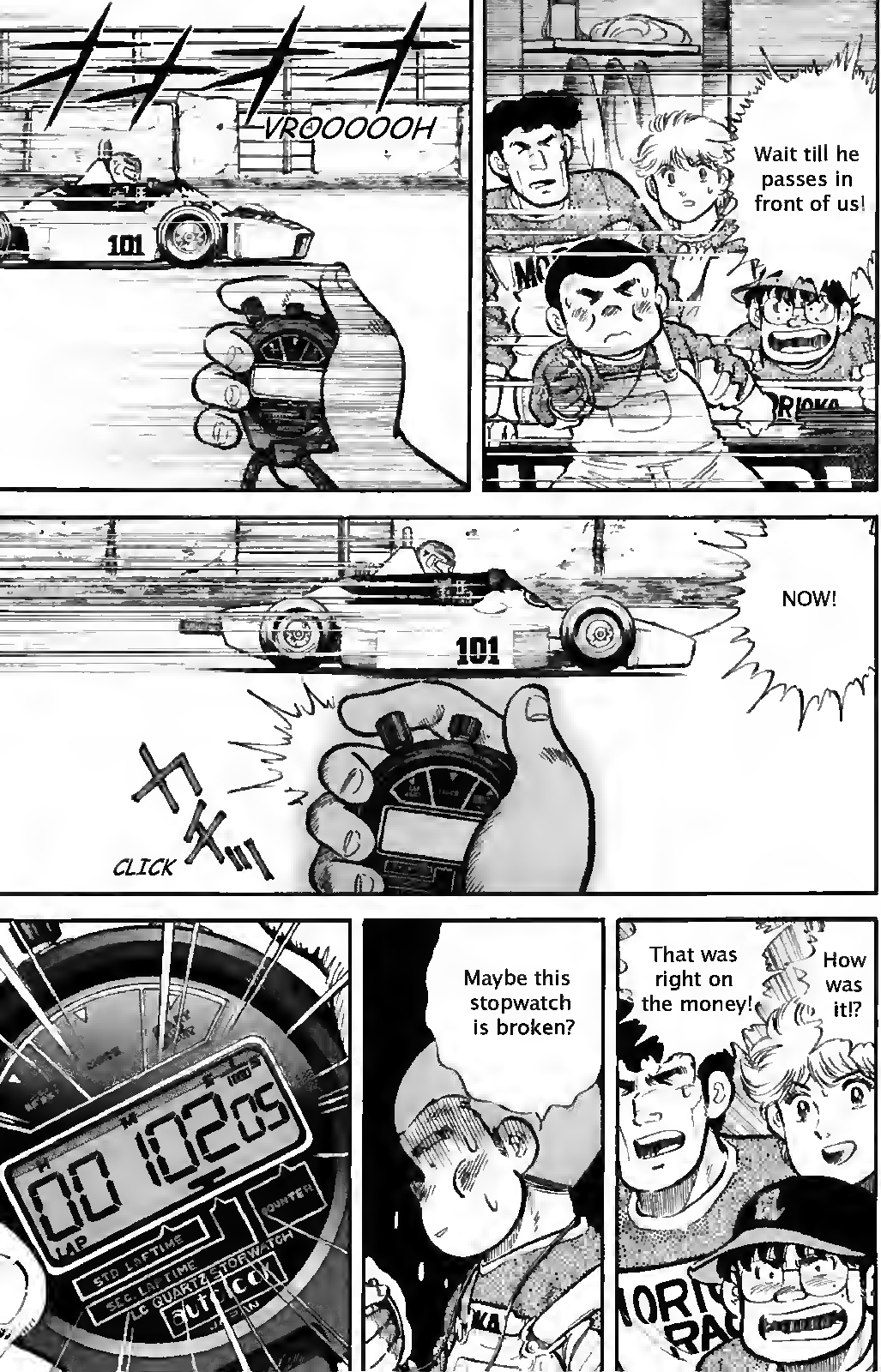

...seconds!
...2.07...
...1 minute...


H
M
S
1/100S
00 10207
LAP


That's what I thought. Maybe I pushed the button too fast.
There must be some mistake!
You're kidding!


It ain't right! Just gotta be a mistake!
Stop mocking!
If this time was actually correct, it ain't much different than Hijiri's course record of 1:01.47 from last year.
ZOOOM
VROOM
I mean, anything in the 1 minute, high 2-second range is right up there with the best of 'em.

I'll make sure to get it right this time.
Should I hold up the board?
I'll pencil it in for now. Mistake or not, that's the time on the clock.
No way. It'll be embarrassing if the time's wrong.
VROOOOH
There he is!
I got it.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
Watch for it!
Don't screw this one up!
Here it goes.
CLICK


VROOOOOH
101
Wait till he passes in front of us!
101
NOW!
CLICK
00'10"05
LAP
STD. LAP TIME
SEC. LAP TIME
LC QUARTZ STOPWATCH
COUNTER
Maybe this stopwatch is broken?
That was right on the money!
How was it!?

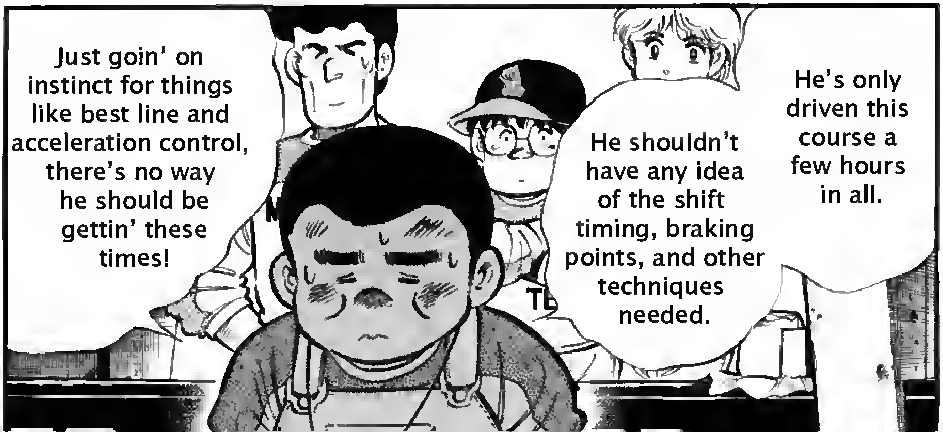
That stopwatch isn't broken, and you didn't make a mistake, Tamotsu.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
ZOOOOOM
yeehaw!

SCRIBBLE
This is Gunma's real time!

I tuned that car, and there's no way he could get these times drivin' it!
I can't believe it. I just can't believe it.
...

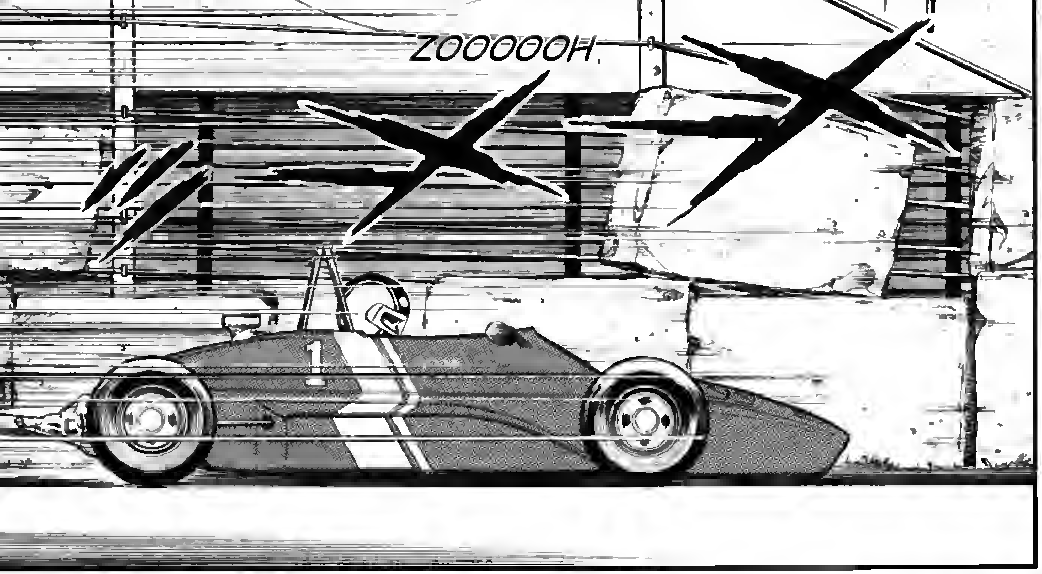
As much as I hate to say it, these times are probably legit.
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
There must be a mistake in all this!
Maybe Gunma pulled some kinda trick.
With courses like Tsukuba, that have a lot of tight corners and short straightaways ...
I've driven the Tsukuba Circuit a lot in SNC (*) races...

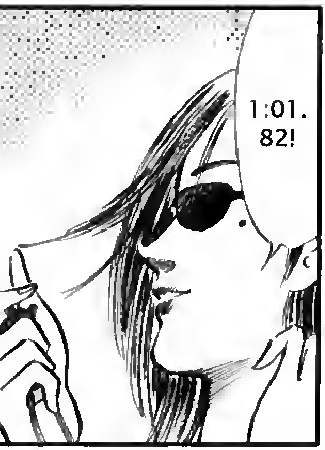
Gunma just don't got that sort of technique!
Which is why I just can't believe it.
...the racer's ability to take corners is more important than the car's top speed.

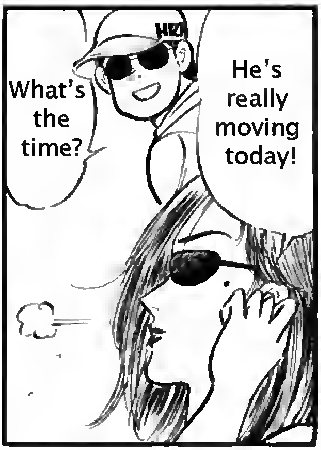

Just goin' on instinct for things like best line and acceleration control, there's no way he should be gettin' these times!
He shouldn't have any idea of the shift timing, braking points, and other techniques needed.
He's only driven this course a few hours in all.

* SNC = Abbrev-iation for the Starlet Normal Cup race.

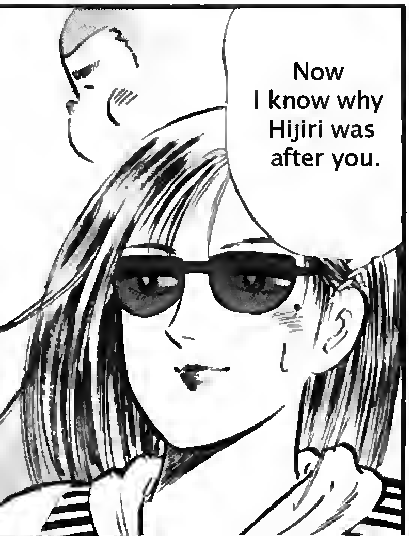
That's true.
Tamotsu, you're the one who's been saying what a genius he is.
The instincts of a genius?
I'm raising the board!
...
...I can't accept what goes against basic logic.
But still ...
Whether you accept it or not, it's a damn good time!
PLOP
We've got to show Gunma his time!
1:02. 05...
T205
SHOO

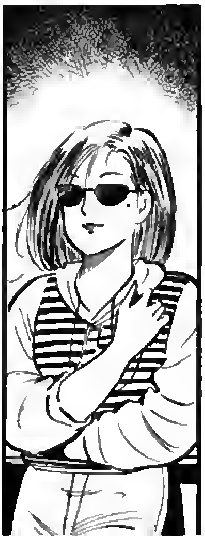

ZOOOOOH
1

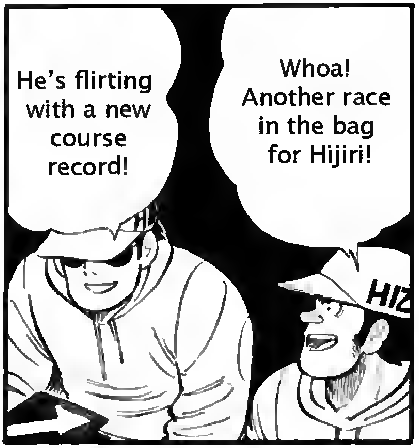

1:01.
82!


What's the time?
He's really moving today!
HIZ

Wow!

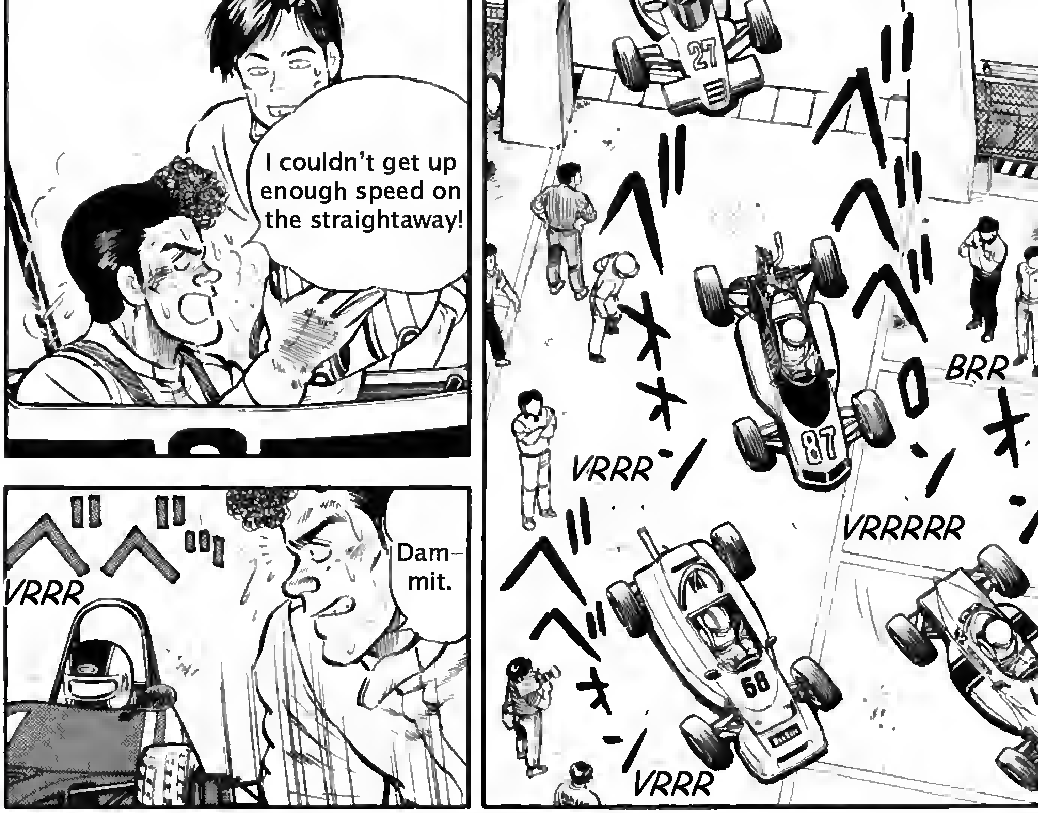

Now I know why Hijiri was after you.

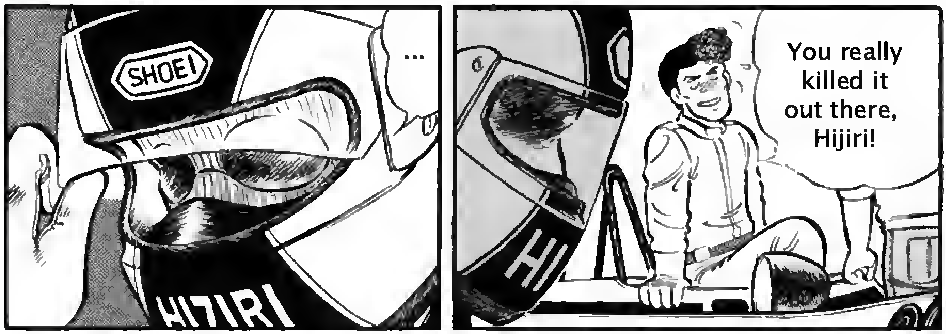


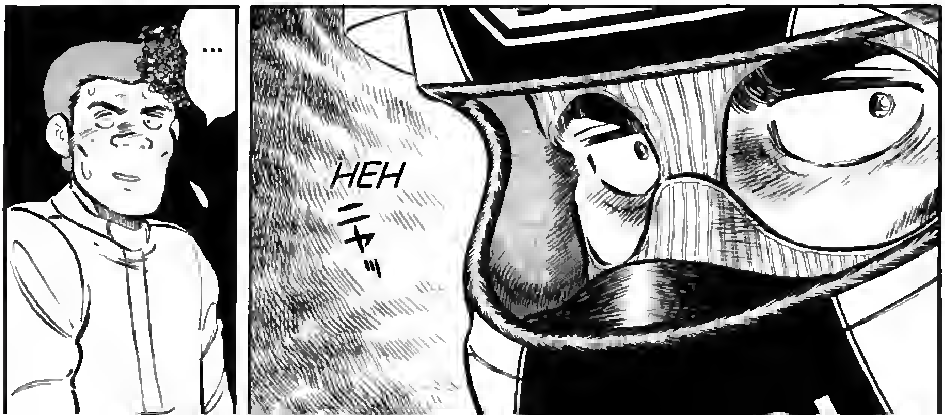

He's flirting with a new course record!
Whoa! Another race in the bag for Hijiri!
HIZ

Like there's a completely different engine!
It sounds different!
SHOEI
HIZIRI
ZOOOOH
1
HIZIRI
No matter how fast I go, it's remarkably smooth!
And what's with this pick-up!?
I've got to have him as my right hand man!
I knew it! I was right!
HIZIRI

BRAAAH
KUSHIK
MORIOKA Racing
Come on!
ZOOOOH
GRRR
VOOOH
KŌSAKA
HIZIRI
VOOOOOOOH
MORIOKA RACING TEAM


I couldn't get up enough speed on the straightaway!
VRRR
Dam-mit.
27
87
58
BRR
VRRR
VRRRRR
VRRR


SHOEI
HIJIRI
...
You really killed it out there, Hijiri!


...
HEH
ニヤッ

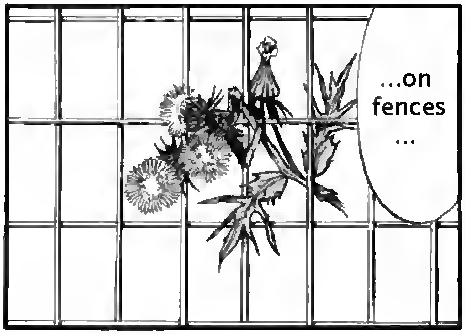
PHEW
Gun-ma!
You blew it Tamura! Why didn't you drive the line we went over!?
Ryu, I... I just...
Oh yeah!
Time, Junko!
Gunma!
I know it looks odd, but it should be fairly accurate! Pretty awesome, huh?
Come on.
GUNMA AKAGI
This can't be right.
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
...

MORIOKA RACING TEA
MORIOKA RACING
Was I really this slow?
Thought I was at least 2 or 3 seconds faster than this.
Who got the pole position?
I got a question, Junko.
Let's get some tea!
Anyway, we still got time till they announce the official time, right?
Gunma.
GUNMA
AKAGI
...it was you!
Maybe ...

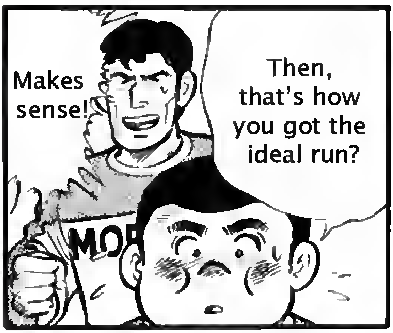
HA HA HA
だっはっは
Gun-ma!
Don't hurt yourself out there!
Speed is the ultimate revenge in space.
軍馬
佐山宅急便
What's up, smarty! I didn't know you were racin'!
Gunma ...
How'd you do it, Gunma!?
You're still here, Tamotsu? Don't you got Hijiri's alignment to fix?
Gunma!
Heh! What are you talkin' about?
Tell me!
How'd you get that time? You must have some kinda secret!

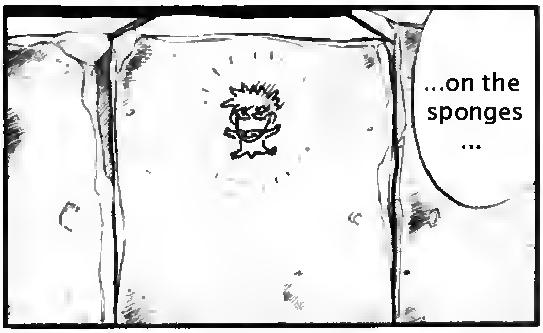
Let go of me you little ...!
No matter how much you hate my guts, I'm still your mechanic!
Tell me!
Tamotsu ...
What're you doin'!?
GRAB
GNMA
MORIOKA RACING
Then I marked a bunch of spots on it.
I snuck onto the course last night and jogged through it.
Marks?
Hmph. Marks, okay!?

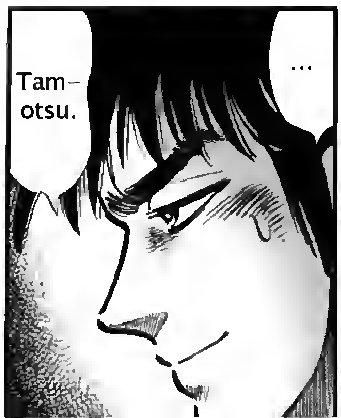
Thought it would be easier to drive if I marked up the course like that.
Basically, I marked the braking positions, where to shift up, and other stuff you put on that chart.

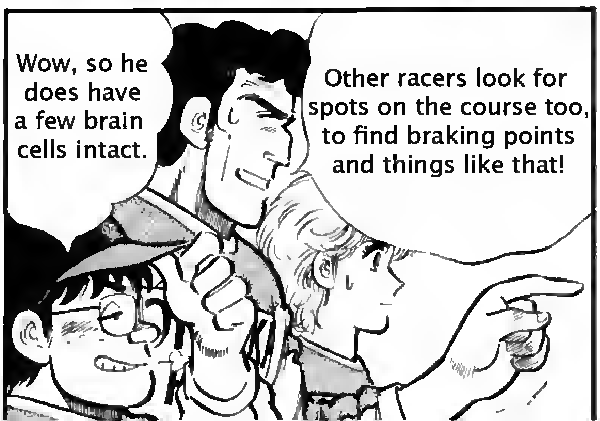

...on fences ...

In the grass ...


Makes sense!
Then, that's how you got the ideal run?

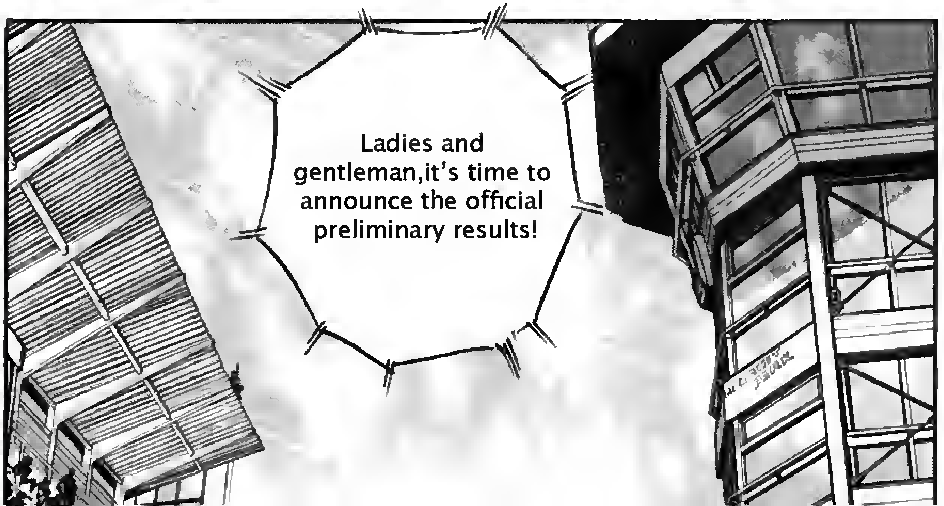

...on the sponges ...


Tam-otsu.
...


Wow, so he does have a few brain cells intact.
Other racers look for spots on the course too, to find braking points and things like that!

GRR
Huh!?
You still want me to aim for the top six after this!?
TUG
MORIOKA RACI

Gu-Gunma ...


Ladies and gentleman,it's time to announce the official preliminary results!

Chapter 8:
Drinks On Me

What the hell is this!?
Ladies and gentleman, it's time to announce the official preliminary results!
You've got to be kidding me!
CLANG
SWEAT
Coke

'86 TSUKUBA CHALLENGE CUP RACE-4th stage

FJ-1600B Preliminary Results

June 8, 1986
Weather: Clear
Course: Dry
Start Time: 2:15 pm
Announcement Time: 2:45 pm

Rank	Car No.	LP	1st Time	2nd Time	Name
1	1	14	01 : 01. 21	01 : 01. 27	Kazuto Hijiri
2	101	14	01 : 01. 30	01 : 02. 05	Gunma Akagi
3	16	13	01 : 02. 57	01 : 02. 82	Mitsuo Watanabe
4	9	14	01 : 02. 70	01 : 02. 78	Yoshimasa Fujita
5	22	14	01 : 03. 06	01 : 03. 12	Tomoyuki Hosono
6	3	14	01 : 03. 15	01 : 03. 28	Koichi Sunai
7	21	10	01 : 03. 46	01 : 03. 57	Isamu Shibata
8	18	12	01 : 03. 55	01 : 03. 80	Kazumi Yamaguchi
9	8	13	01 : 03. 68	01 : 03. 76	Sugio Tamura
10	10	12	01 : 03. 69	01 : 04. 02	Yukimasa Fukuda
11	37	13	01 : 03. 76	01 : 04. 01	Eisaku Ookawa
12	30	14	01 : 03. 96	01 : 04. 16	Noriyoshi Ishizawa
13	7	13	01 : 04. 15	01 : 04. 15	Noriyuki Shibuya
14	14	10	01 : 04. 36	01 : 04. 68	Koichi Inoue
15	20	14	01 : 04. 66	01 : 04. 82	Kenji Matsumoto
16	25	11	01 : 04. 72	01 : 04. 95	Hiroshi Abe
17	6	10	01 : 05. 02	01 : 05. 13	Keizo Kirihara

Course Clerk

Rank	Car No.	LP	1st Time	2nd Time	
1	1	14	01 : 01. 21	01 : 01. 27	Kazuto Hijiri
2	101	14	01 : 01. 30	01 : 02. 05	Gunma Akagi
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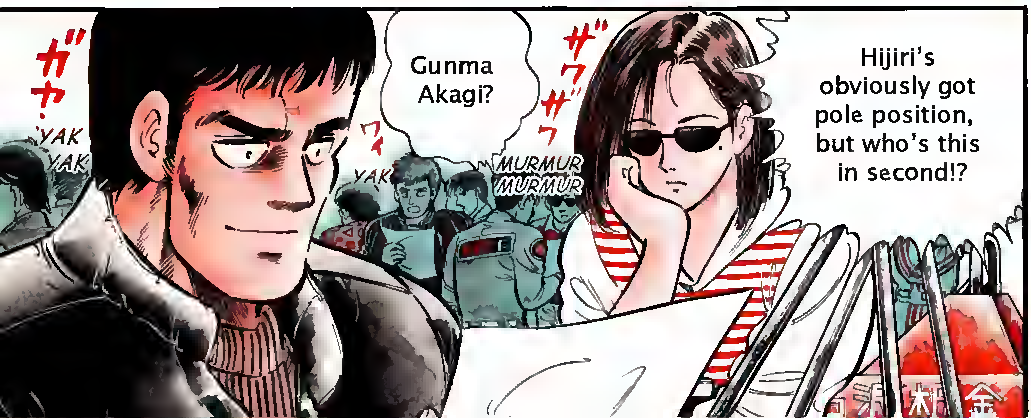
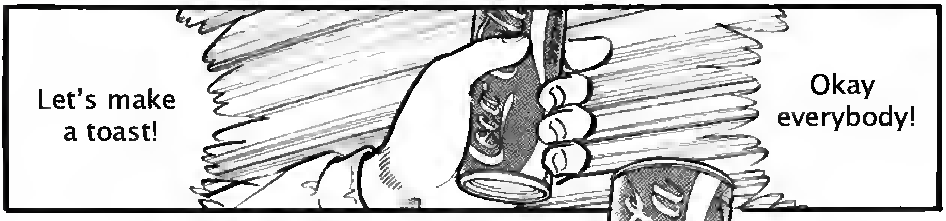
			01 : 02. 70	01 : 02. 78	Yoshimasa Fujita

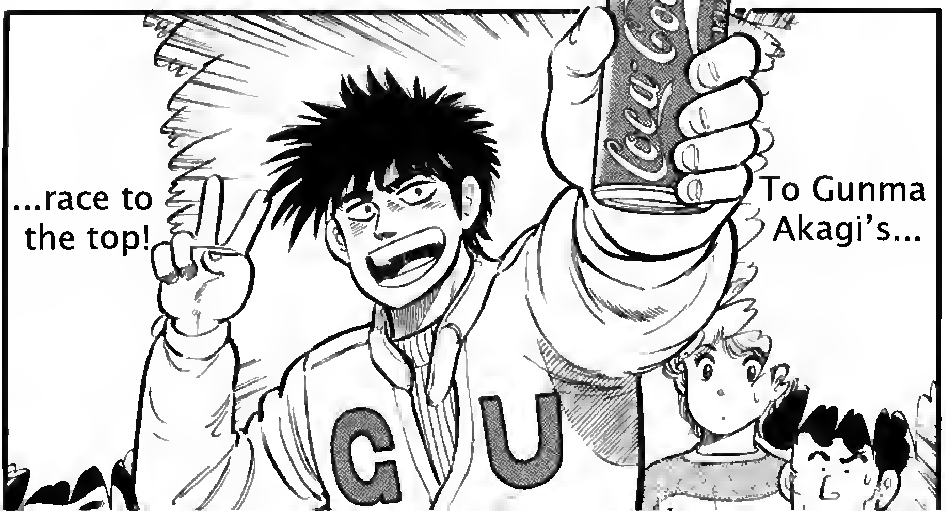


He beat my record from last year.
1:01. 30...
Is this some kind of joke? Look at this time!
TAMURA
!?
!?
It's no joke people!
FOR YOU!
AQUARIUS
Knock it off, Gunma. You're embarra-ssing us.
FWISH
Oh
GUNMA
BOOYAH!
ばんっ!!
101

Drinks are on me, fellas! Let the chug-fest begin!
Whoa...
おとと
BONK
ゴロ

Good timing, too. I was pretty thirsty.
That was a nice gesture.
Hey, thanks.
POP
POP


Let's make a toast!
Okay everybody!


...race to the top!
To Gunma Akagi's...
GU

I paid for those outta my own pocket, you jerks!
What?! Hey! Stop it!
UGH
MORIOKA RACING TEAM
101
MICHELIN

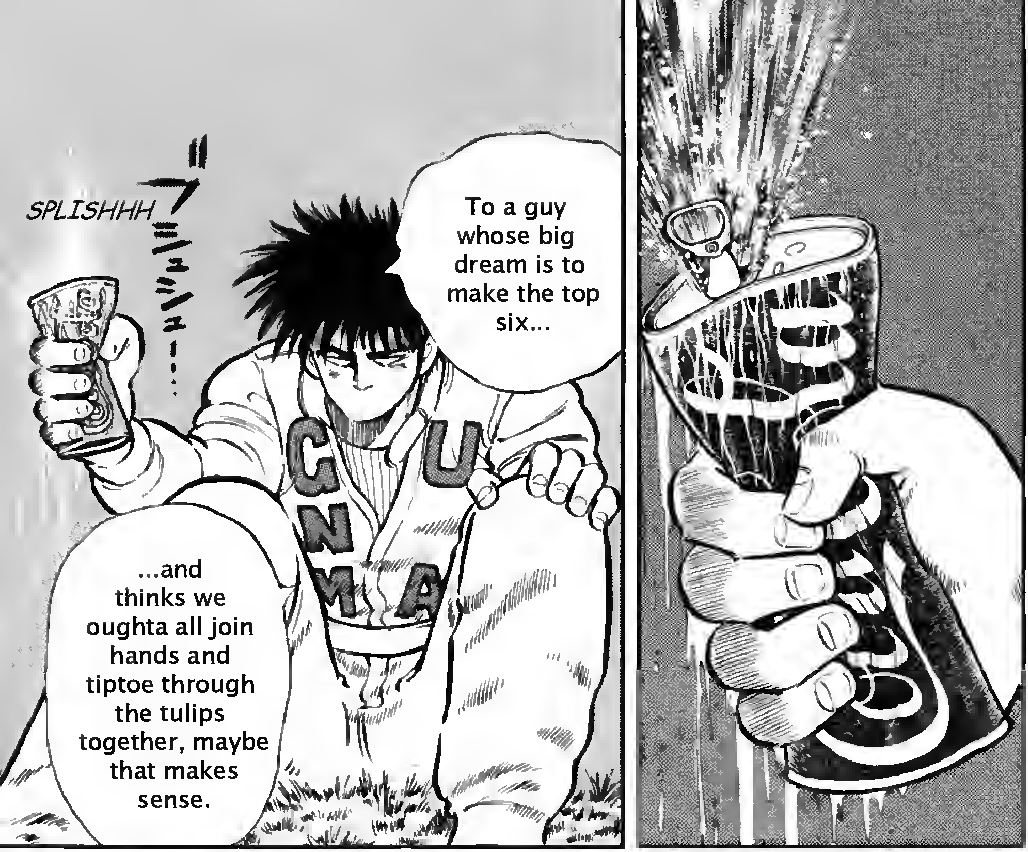
...
バカ！ Jerk!
Arrogant!
きたなーい！ Dirty!
Stupid!

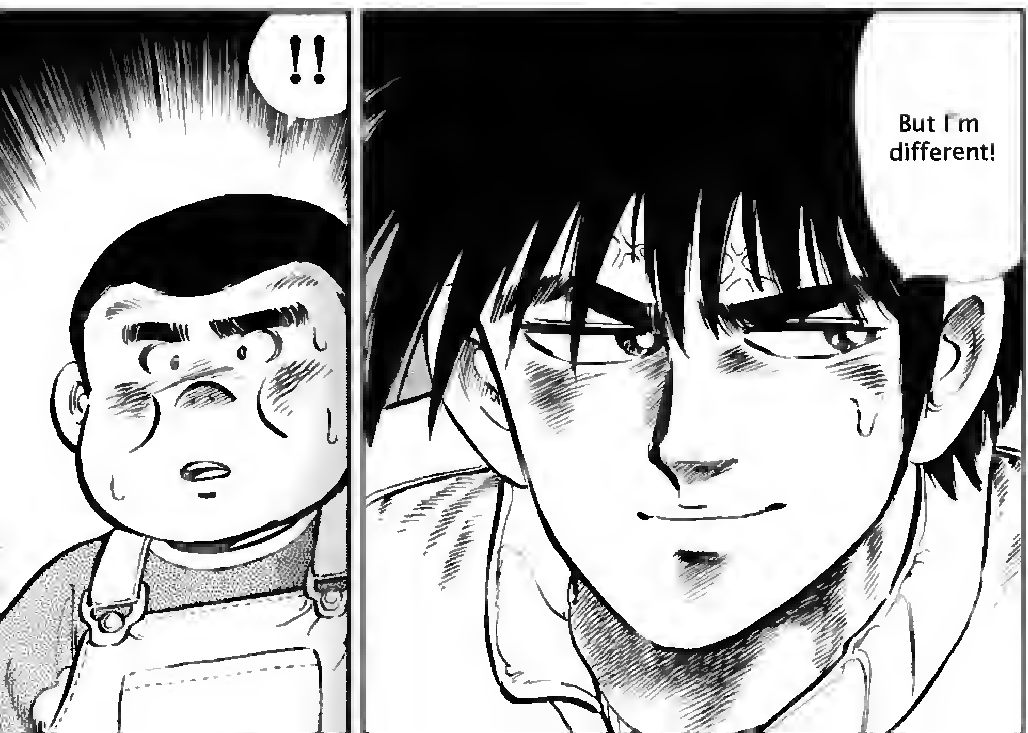
Nah.
About Gunma Akagi's times?
HIZIRI
Is it that shocking?
These are Tamotsu's times.
He may have been driving, but these aren't his times.
Not at all.
Keep doing what you can to win him over.
Ruiko, I want Tamotsu to be my full-time mechanic.
I agree.
HA HA HA
Come on. A hottie like you?
I might not have what it takes.

Right.
Let's go.
Let them sort it out.
Shut up! And go wipe Hijiri's butt for him!
Are you out of your mind, Gunma!? Everybody's gonna hate you now!
SPLASH
No idea.
Other than I'm a special kind of genius.
Gunma, we came in as a new race team, partway through the season!
And somehow you landed the 2nd best time in the preliminary round.
Do you even know what this means?
SIGH
So what's your point?
That's right.
Ha ha.
It makes the other racers, who've been here awhile, very uncomfortable!

I can understand how happy you are to get those good times, but to rub those other racers the wrong way by makin' a toast to yourself...
You are a special kind of idiot, Gunma.
...against us!
You're turnin' every one of 'em...
STARE
You are such a softie.
...
Why you starin' at me like that?

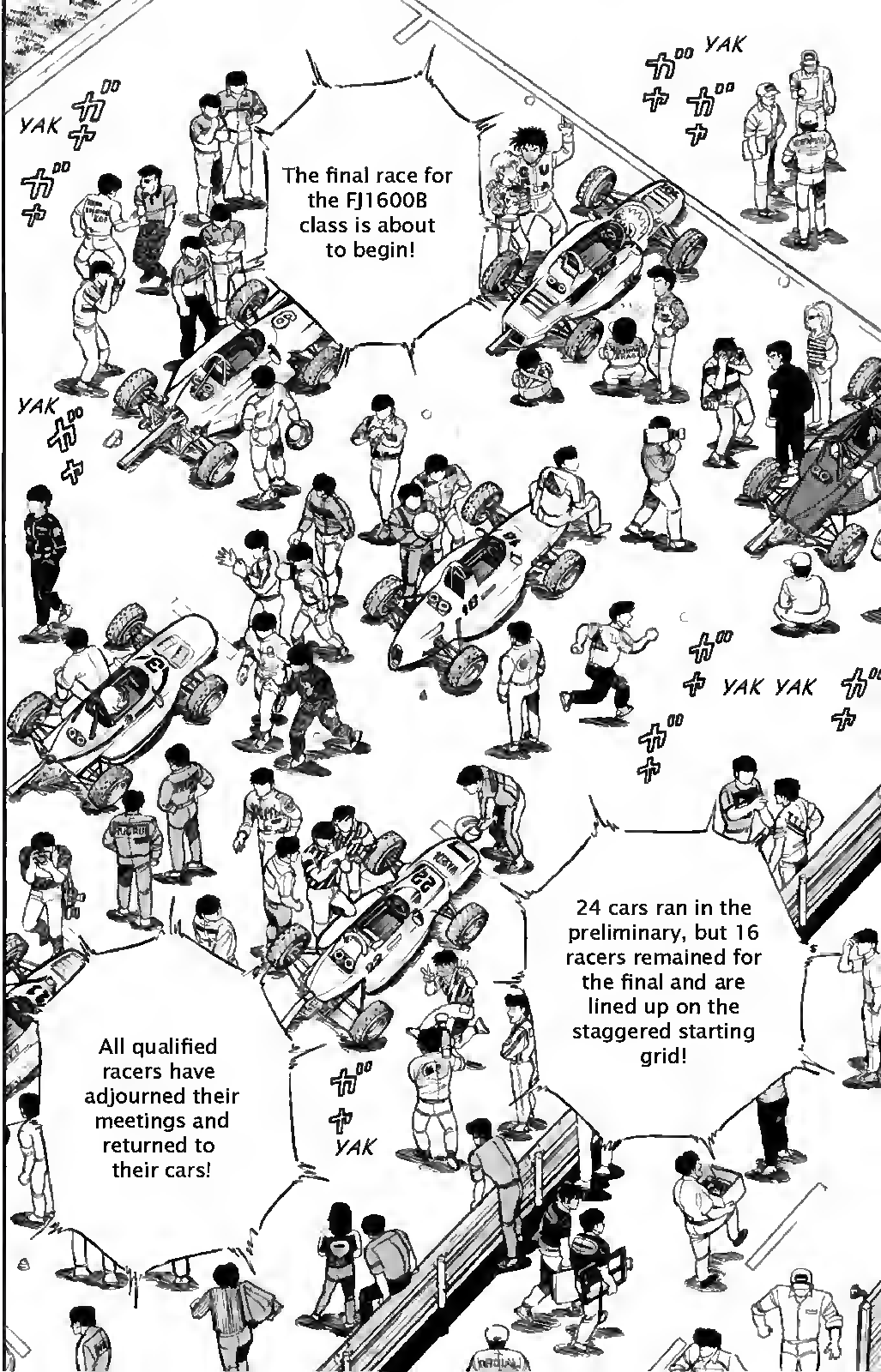
In the heat of battle, you think an apology will make everything okay.
... you looked him right in the eyes and apologized like a wuss.
That's the type of guy you are.
Even way back when we was gettin' chased up in the mountains by that BMW...
...they'd be our allies?
...but do you really think, if we play nice...
You say I made 'em our enemies ...
...everybody is my enemy!
As long as I'm racin' ...
CRUSH
...don't make 'em hate us more than necessary.
...but still...
I see where you're comin' from...


SPLISHHH
To a guy whose big dream is to make the top six...
...and thinks we oughta all join hands and tiptoe through the tulips together, maybe that makes sense.


!!
But I'm different!

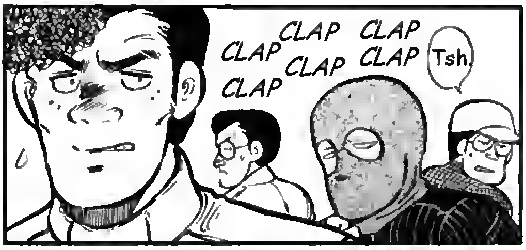
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP
BADUMP

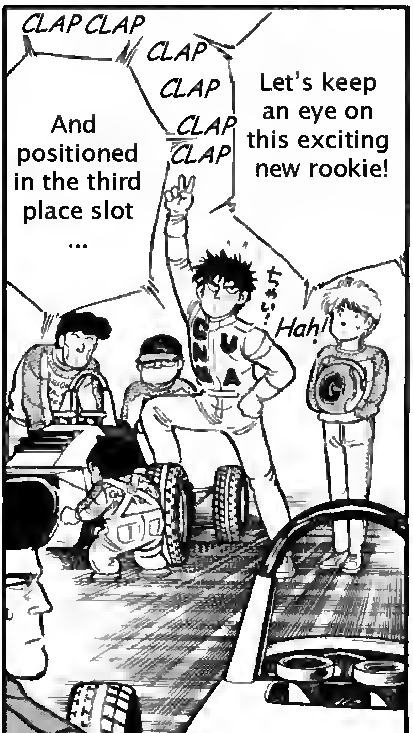
CLANG
Gunma... You're goin' to aim for the top...
...no matter what!?
PAT
Spendin' your life chasin' tail means you'll start tailin' people on the course. Pretty bad habit, dude!
You sucked pretty bad out there, Sunai. And terrible times! Did your girl just dump you or somethin'?
That rookie really ticks me off!
...
HA HA HA
!?
Think you can do me a favor?
That's right.
I believe I lent you some money, Abe.


The final race for the FJ1600B class is about to begin!
YAK
YAK
YAK
YAK YAK
YAK
24 cars ran in the preliminary, but 16 racers remained for the final and are lined up on the staggered starting grid!
All qualified racers have adjourned their meetings and returned to their cars!

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
What an impressive time! It's Hijiri's best and also a new course record!
Kazuto Hijiri has earned the pole position with the top preliminary time of 1:01.21!
HIJIRI

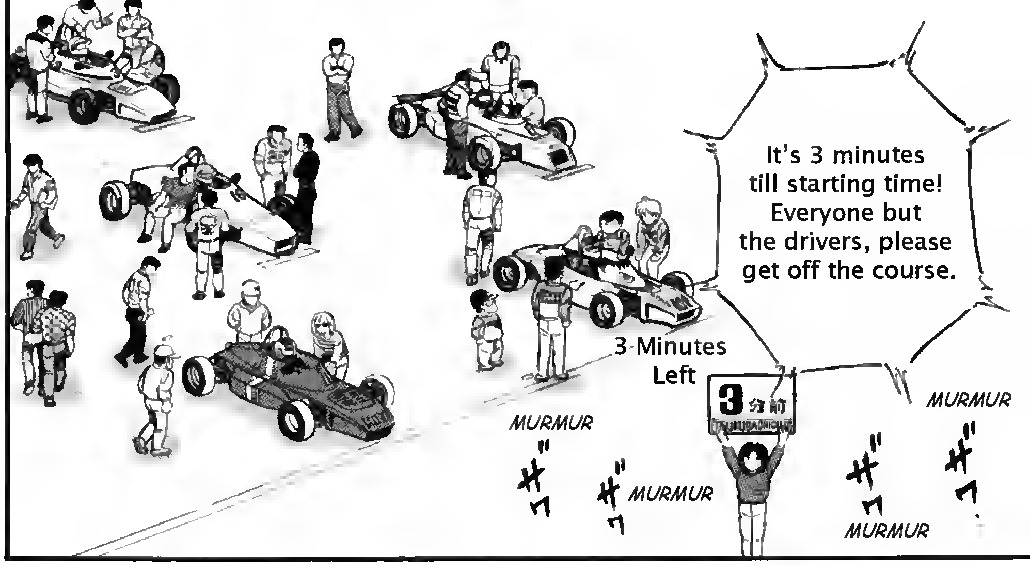
His time was remarkably close to Hijiri's at 1:01.30.
And in a shocking turn of events, rookie driver Gunma Akagi managed second place, in only his second race ever!
軍
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

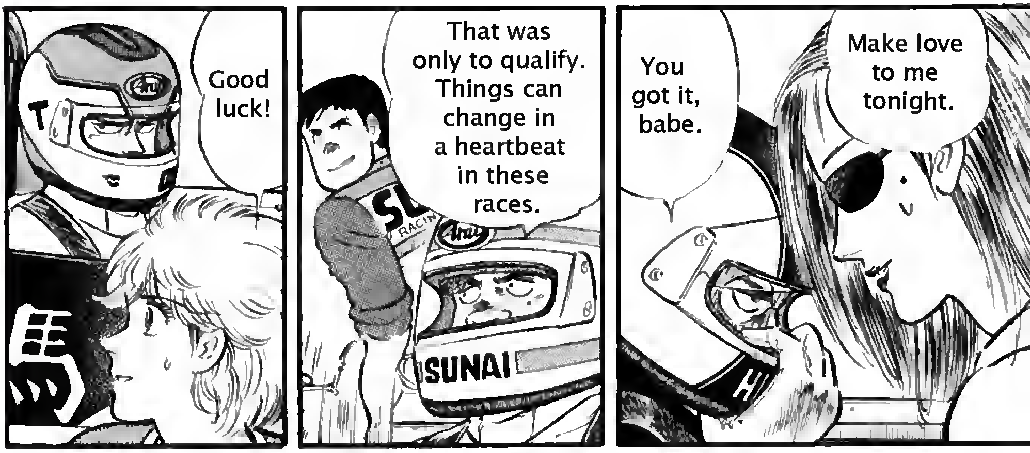

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
Tsh

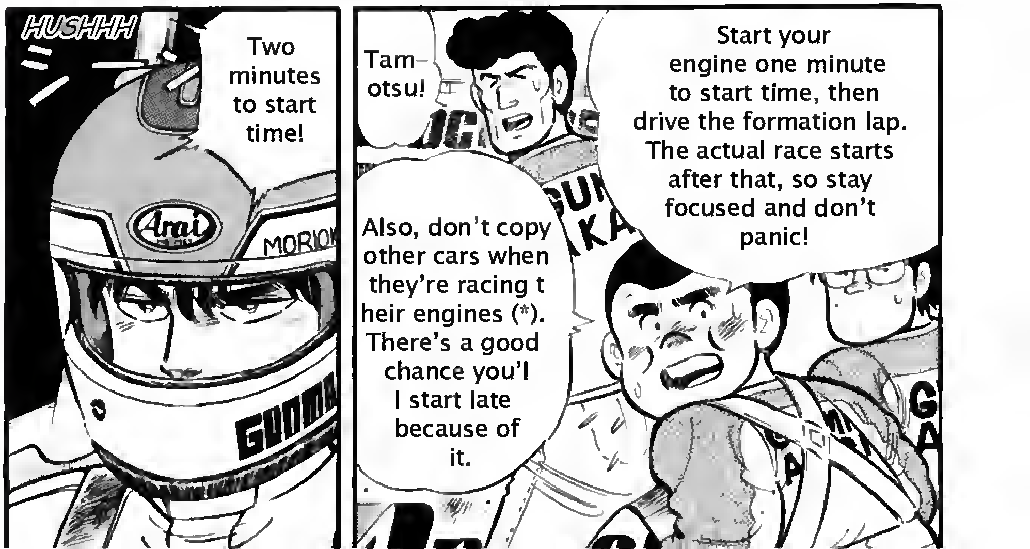

CLAP CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP CLAP
And positioned in the third place slot ...
Let's keep an eye on this exciting new rookie!
ちぇっ!
Hah!
GUNMA

...
25

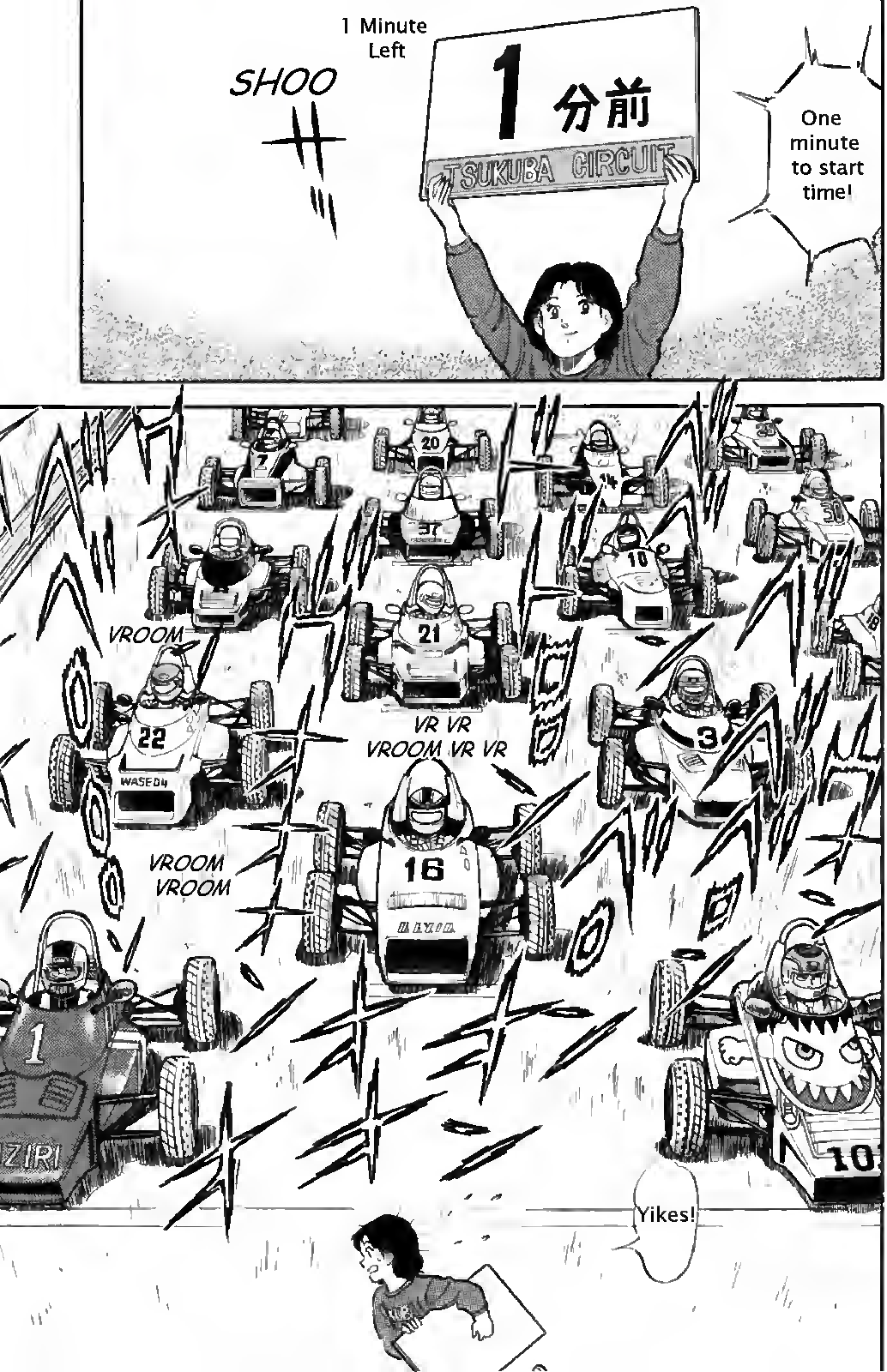
Enjoy it while it lasts, kid.



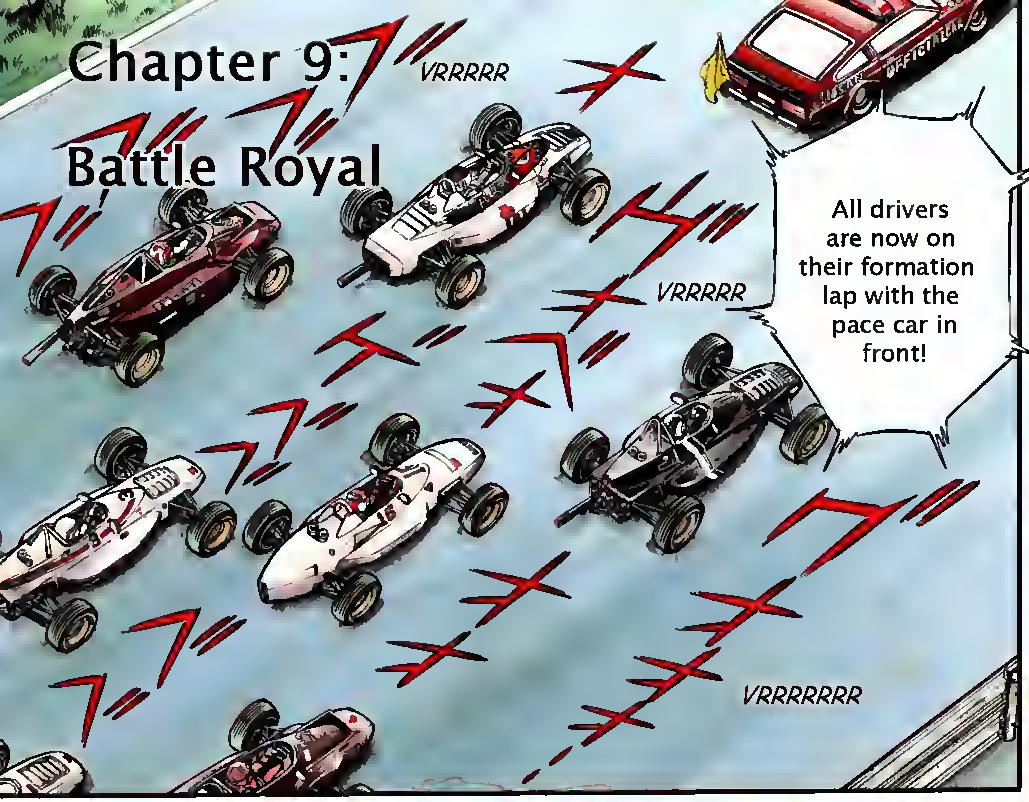


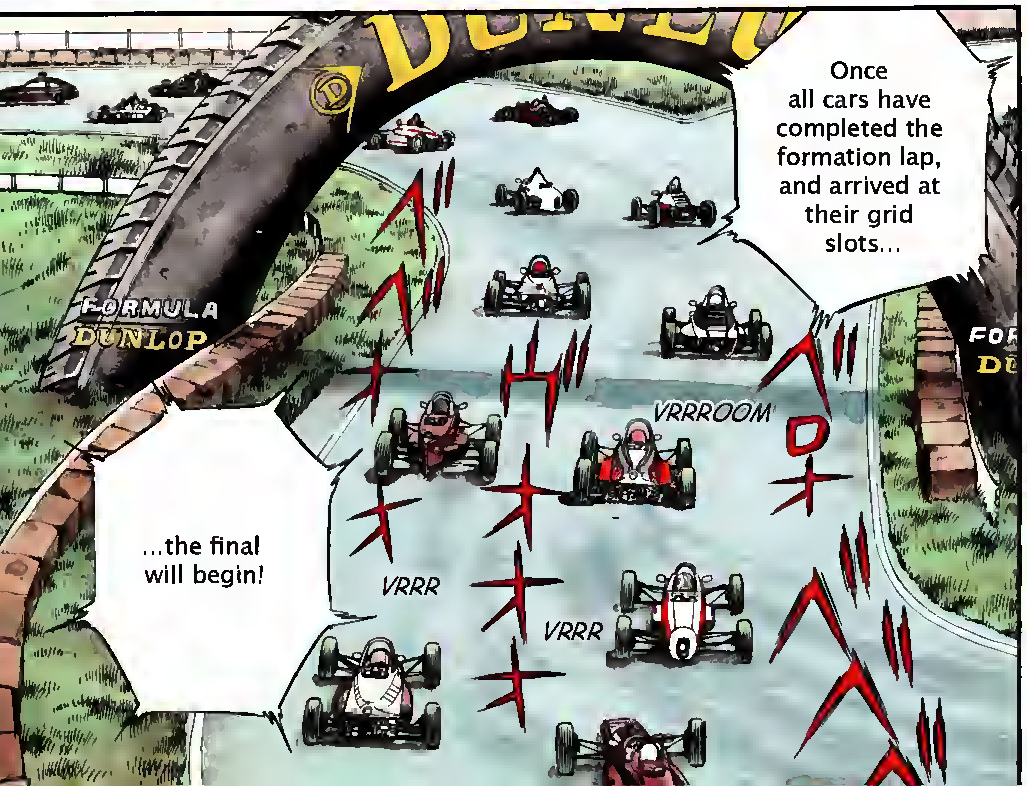

HUSHHH
Two minutes to start time!
Tam-otsu!
Start your engine one minute to start time, then drive the formation lap. The actual race starts after that, so stay focused and don't panic!
Also, don't copy other cars when they're racing t heir engines (*). There's a good chance you'l l start late because of it.

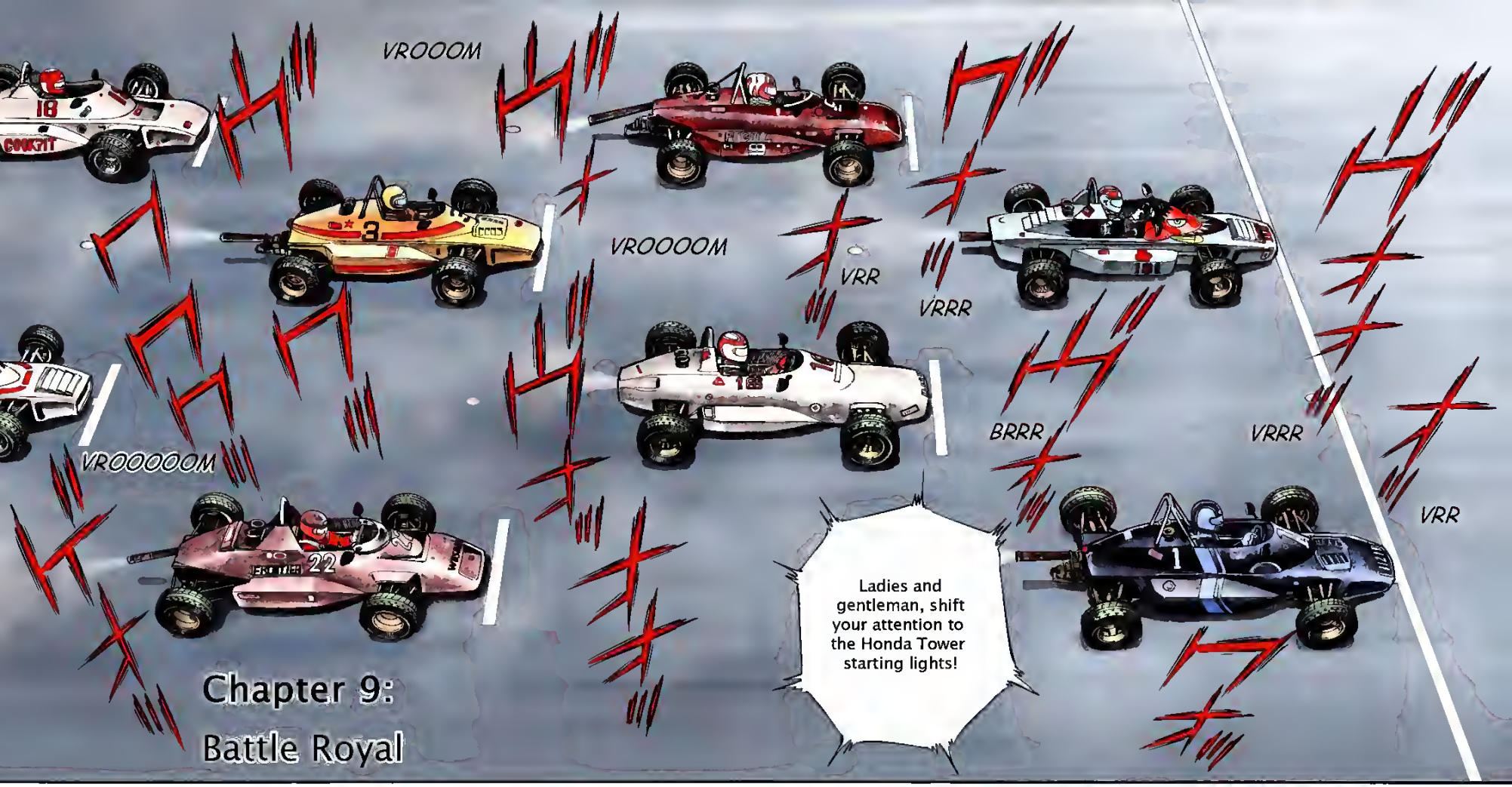
* Racing the engine = Idling the engine.

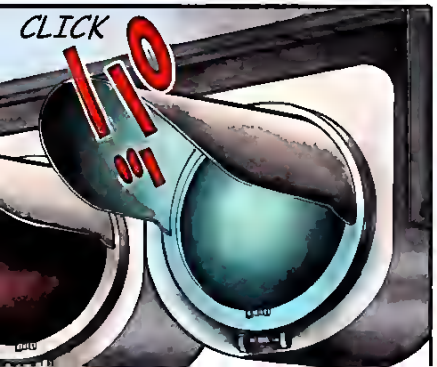

1 Minute Left
SHOO
1 分前
TSUKUBA CIRCUIT
One minute to start time!
VROOM
VR VR VROOM VR VR
VROOM VROOM
Yikes!

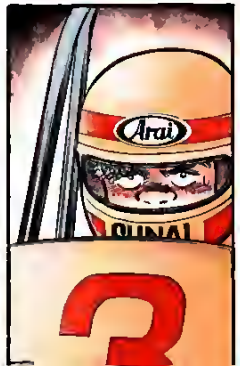
SHIVER
...I'm feelin' pretty nervous. Heh heh.
Oh.
I uh ...
SHIVER
SHIVER
What's wrong, Tamotsu? You look so pale.
!?
GUNMA AKAGI
SHH
MORIOKA RACING
And I got a bad feeling about this.
I'm embarrassed to say, I'm a timid person.
Calm down. Gunma's the one driving, after all.
Dum
Duh
Dum
30 seconds and counting!
GUNMA


Chapter 9:
Battle Royal
VRRRRR
VRRRRR
VRRRRRRR
All drivers are now on their formation lap with the pace car in front!

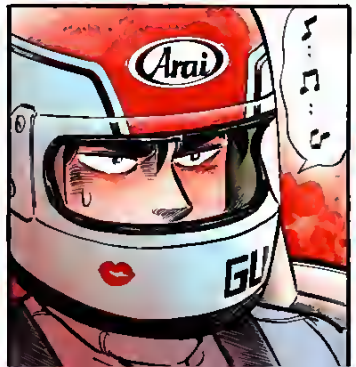

FORMULA DUNLOP
VRRROOM
VRRR
VRRR
Once all cars have completed the formation lap, and arrived at their grid slots...
...the final will begin!

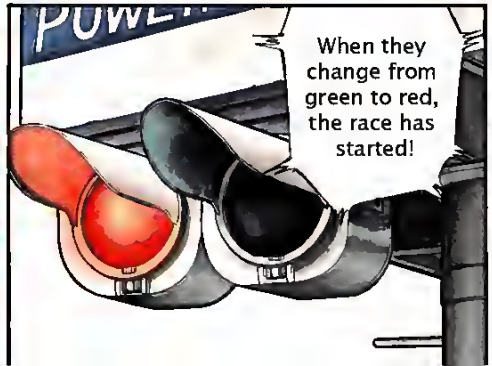

VROOOM
VROOOOM
VRR
VRRR
BRRR
VRRR
VRR
VROOOOOM
Ladies and gentleman, shift your attention to the Honda Tower starting lights!
Chapter 9:
Battle Royal

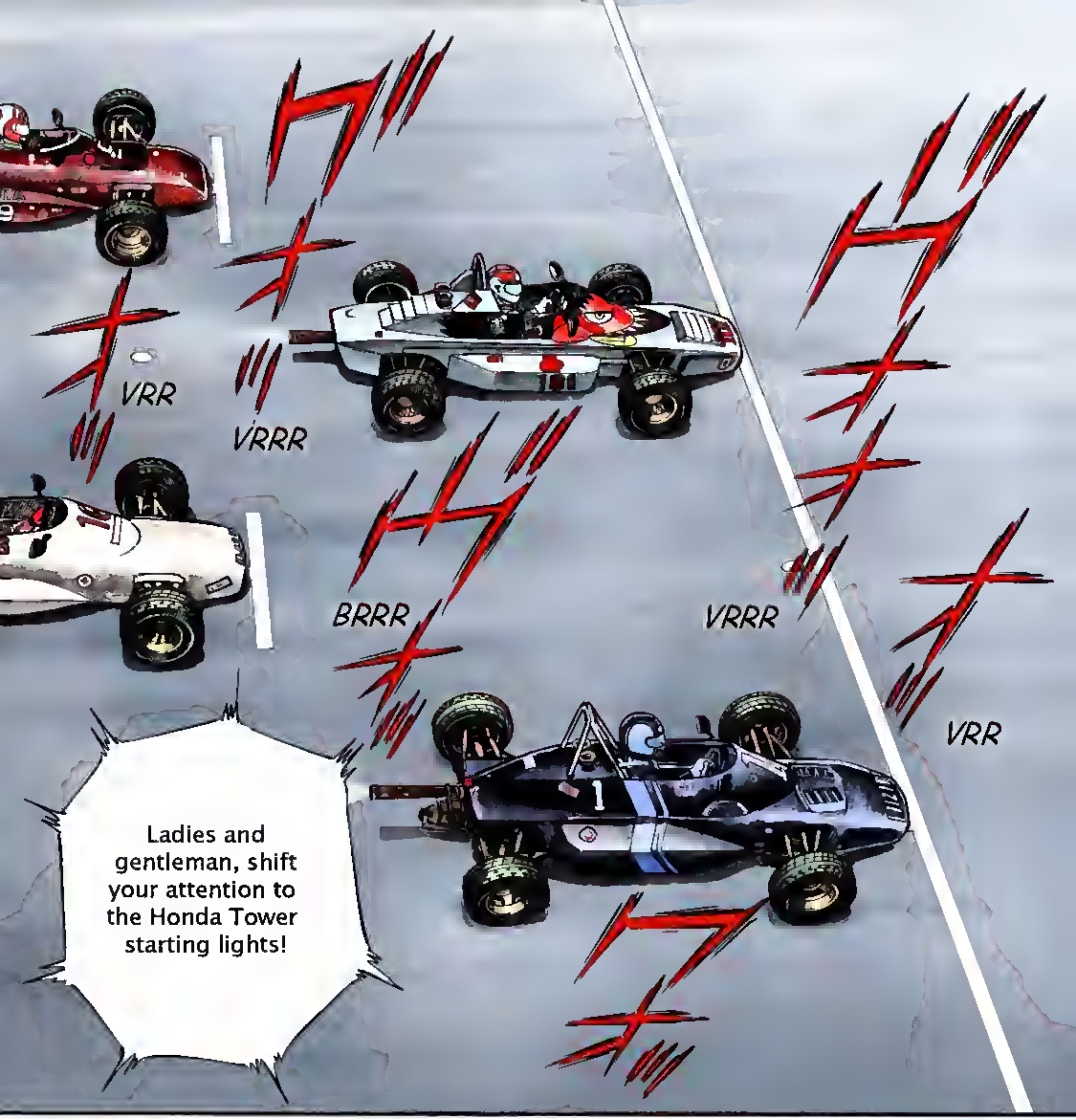

CLICK

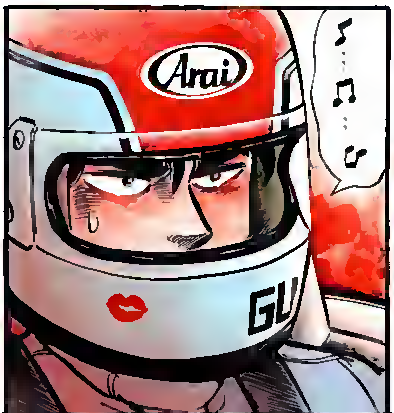

Arai

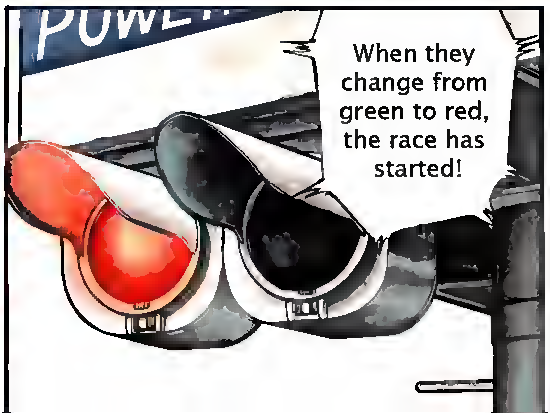
SHOEI


Arai

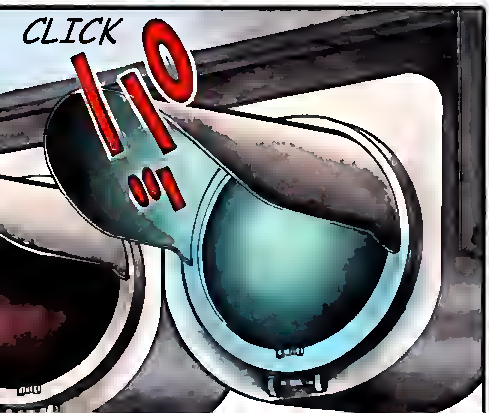

When they change from green to red, the race has started!

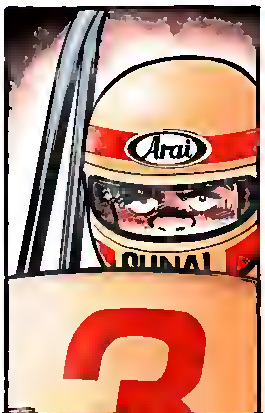

VRR
VRRR
BRRR
VRRR
VRR
Ladies and gentleman, shift your attention to the Honda Tower starting lights!


Arai


When they change from green to red, the race has started!

Chapter 9:
Battle Royal

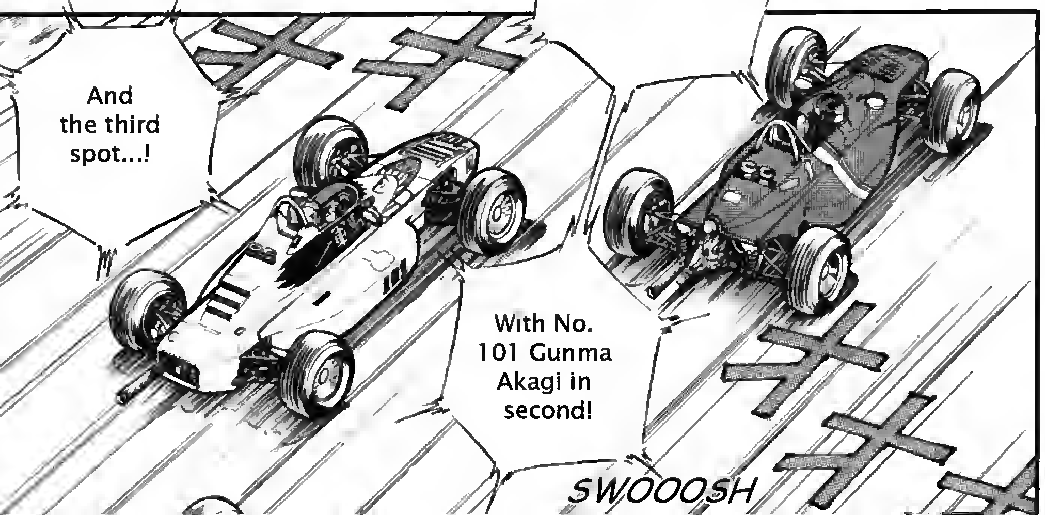




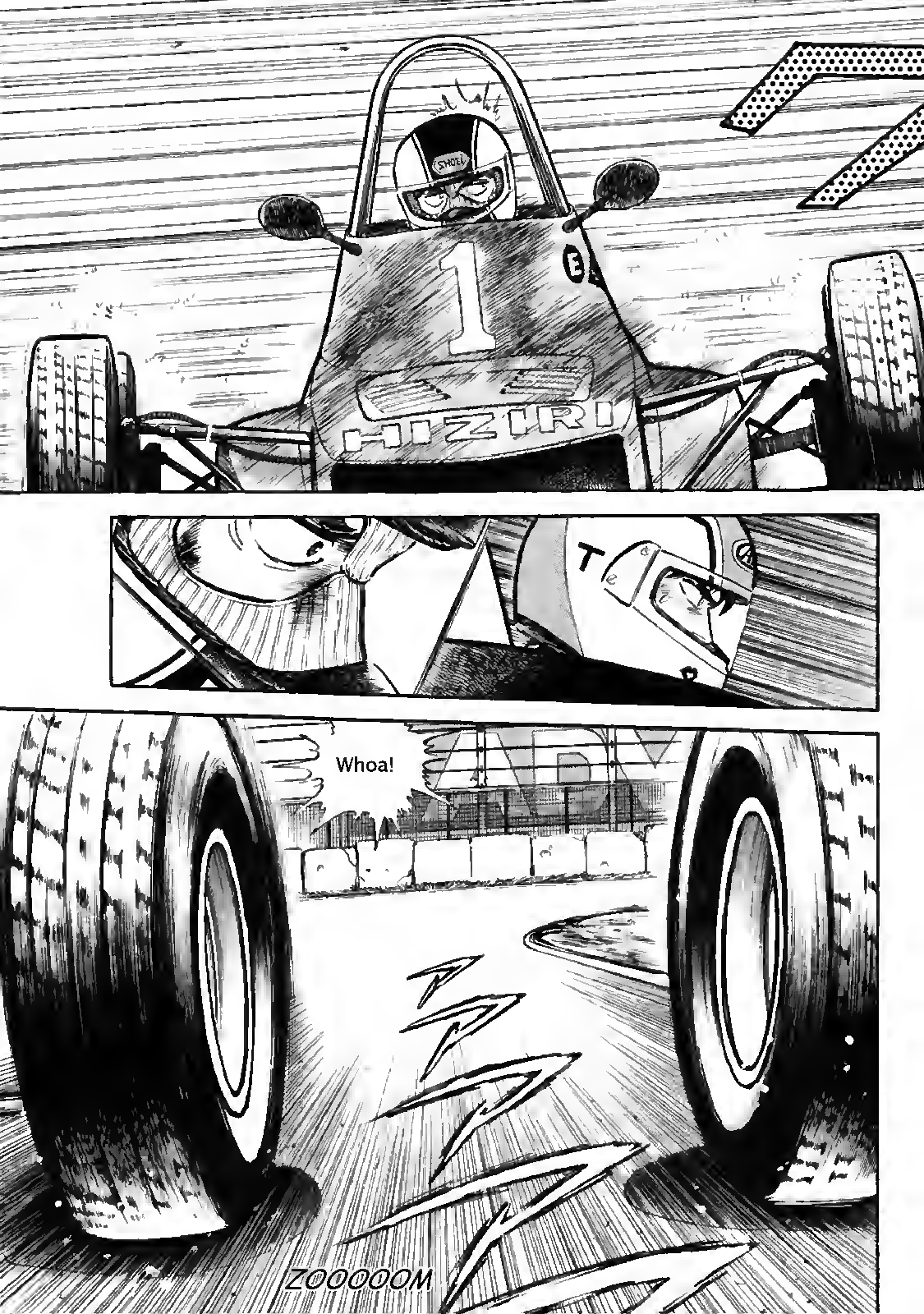
BRAHHHH
BRAAAAH
BRAAAH
MOTUL
1
HIZIRI
16
21
3

ZOOOOOM
ZOOOOOM
All cars are off to a great start!
ZOOOOOM
1
MORIO RA
4

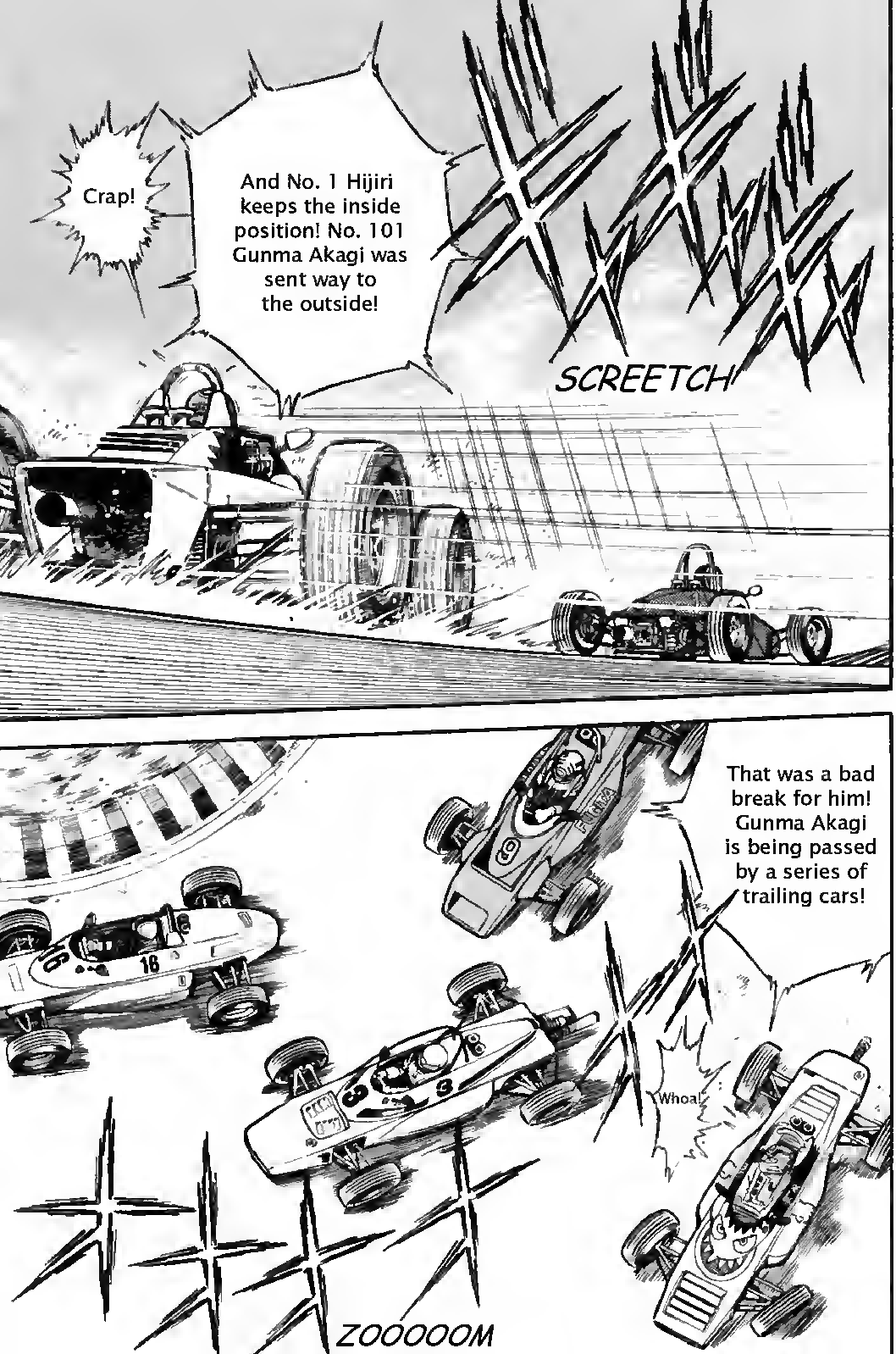
W.OOHOO
KURIBAYAS
No. 1 Hijiri is off to a quick lead!

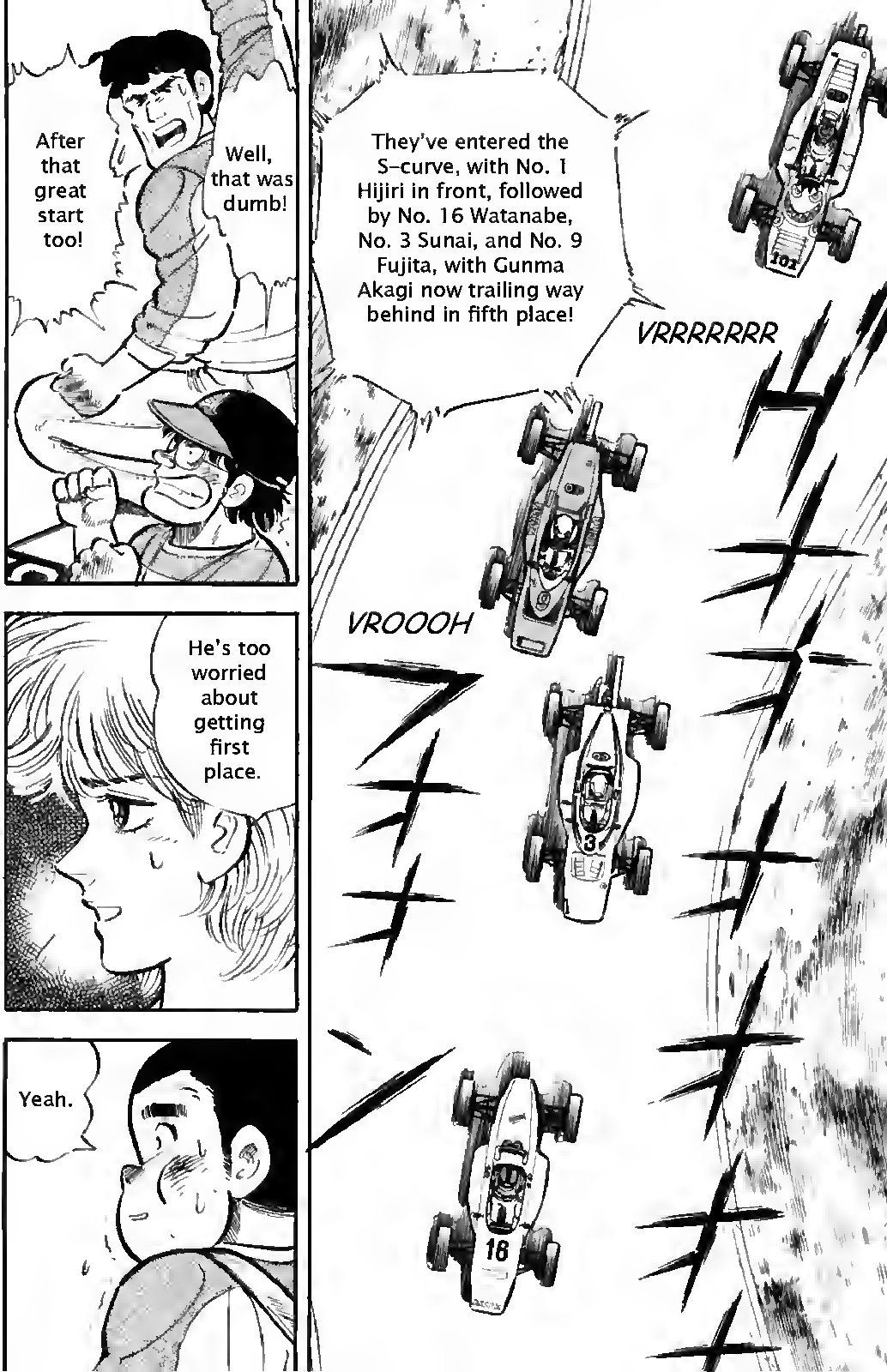

And the third spot...!
With No. 101 Gunma Akagi in second!
SWOOOSH

VROOOM
Wait a minute! Gunma Akagi is now neck and neck with Hijiri!
They're battling for inside position on the first corner!
MORIOKA
!
Will he pass!?
Heh!


1
HIZIRI
Whoa!
ZOOOOOM

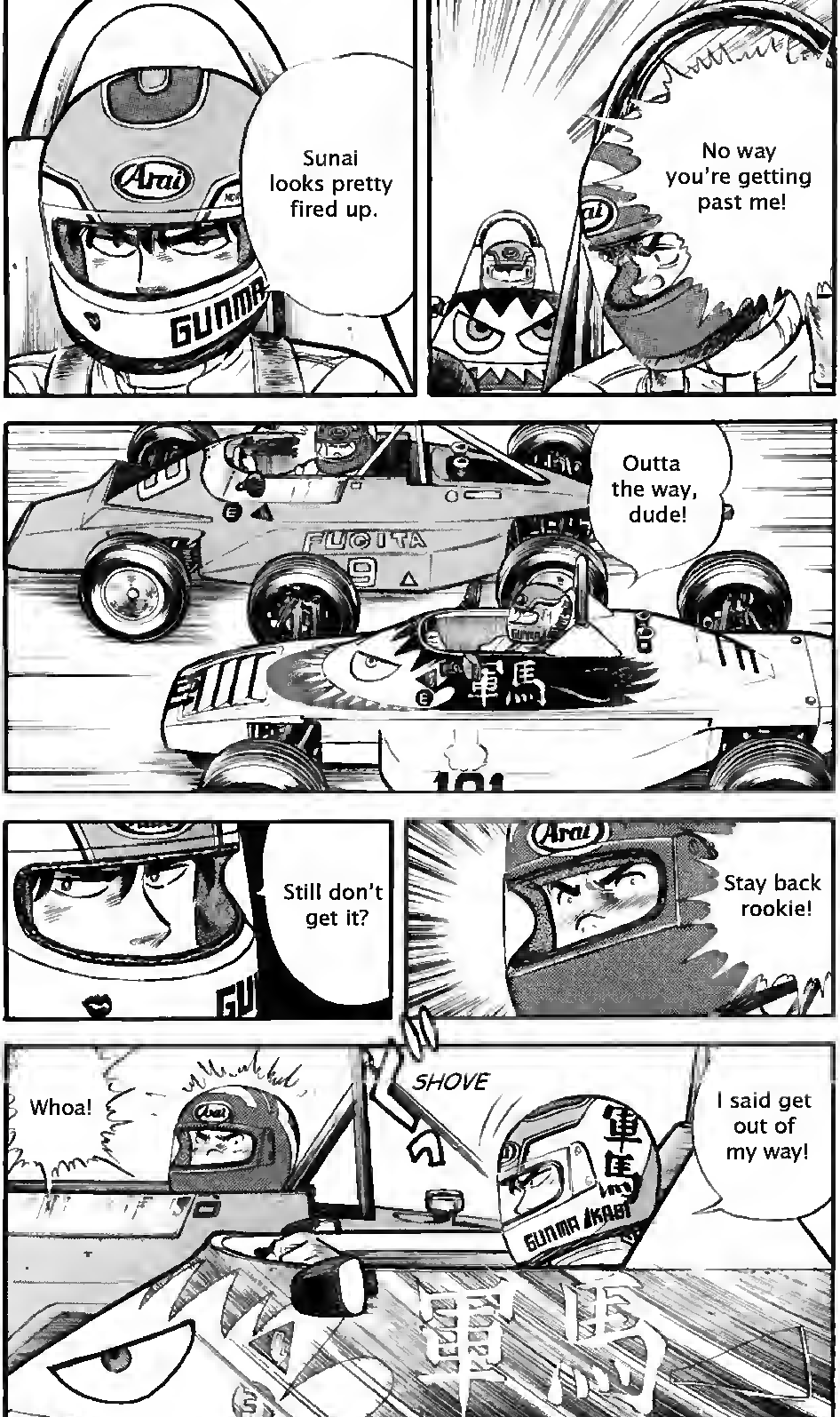
ZOOM
Come on!
Come on!
Come on!
ZOOM
1
HIZIRI
101
VROOM

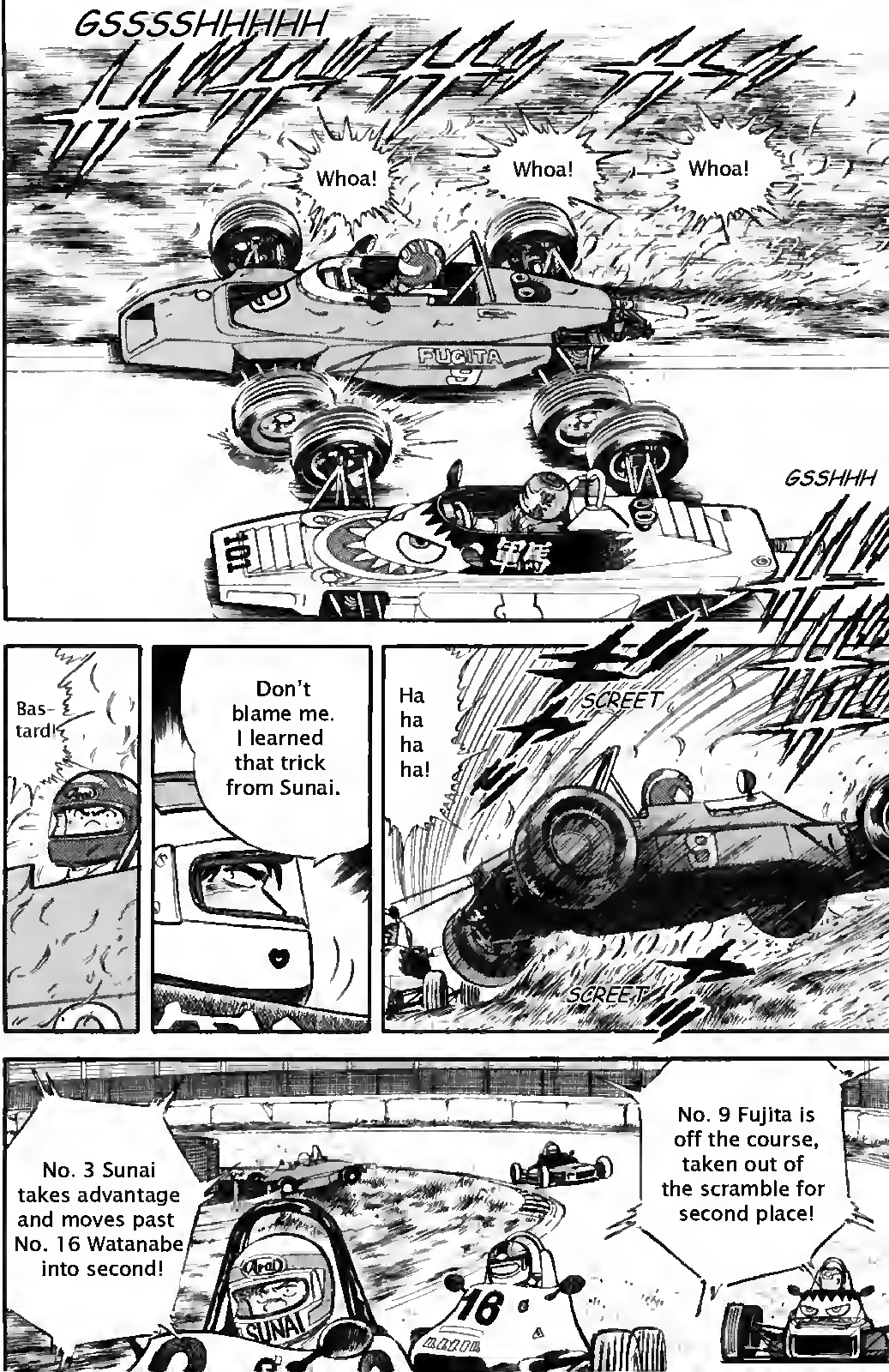

Crap!
And No. 1 Hijiri keeps the inside position! No. 101 Gunma Akagi was sent way to the outside!
SCREETCH
That was a bad break for him! Gunma Akagi is being passed by a series of trailing cars!
Whoa!
ZOOOOOM

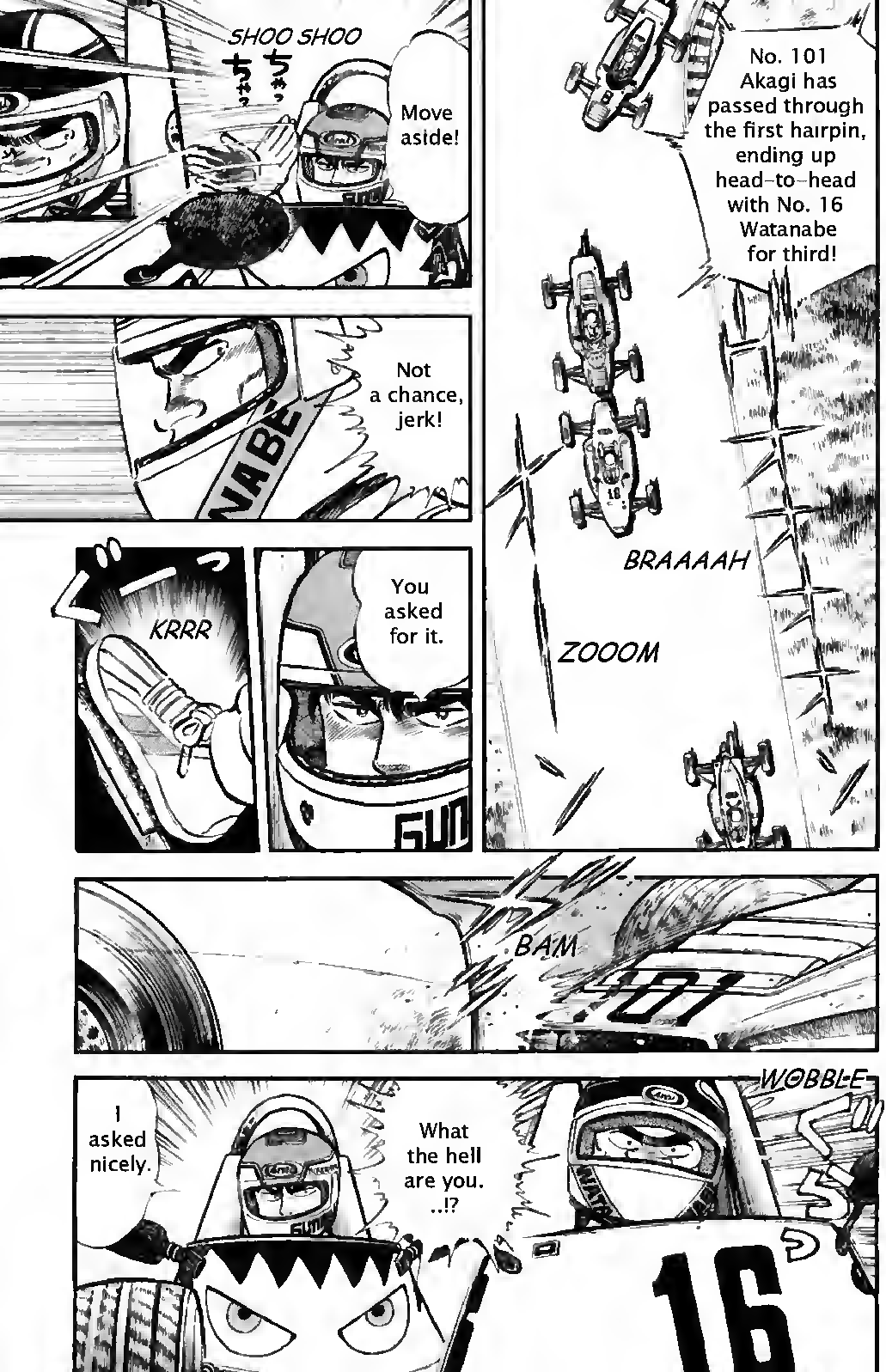

After that great start too!
Well, that was dumb!
He's too worried about getting first place.
Yeah.
They've entered the S-curve, with No. 1 Hijiri in front, followed by No. 16 Watanabe, No. 3 Sunai, and No. 9 Fujita, with Gunma Akagi now trailing way behind in fifth place!
VRRRRRRR
VROOOH
101
3
16

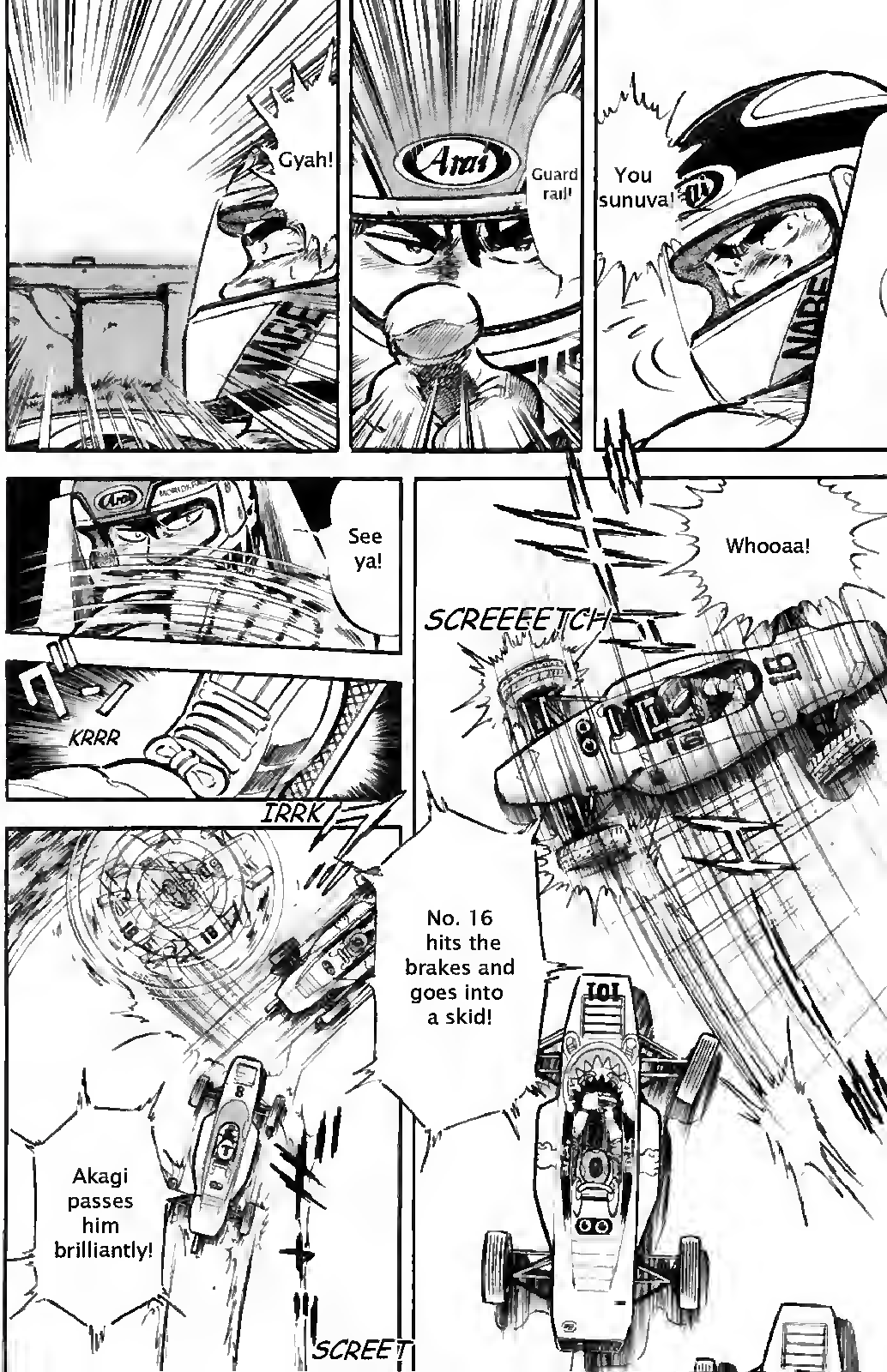
HIZIRI
Look at him go!
ZOOOM
HIZIRI
ZOOOOOM
Hijiri's been amazing since the preliminary race, and he's widened the gap between himself and second place as he approaches the home stretch!
1
A group of cars is battling for second behind Hijiri!
BRAAAAH
They're packed together tight!
101
3
16
Which of these cars battling for second place will break out of the crowd and start moving in on Hijiri!?

Gunma ...
He probably can't hear us, but oh well.
Take your time!
Come on! Don't get too excited!
MORIOKA RACING
Just don't do anything stupid.
If you keep this up, you'll finish in the top six.
Please stay steady.
First I gotta shake off these nobodies.
Watch out, Hijiri. I'm comin' for you.
Nothin' to panic about. Still got 14 laps to go.
Heh heh. We're still on the first lap.
Then it's just you and me, Hijiri!


Sunai looks pretty fired up.
No way you're getting past me!
Outta the way, dude!
Still don't get it?
Stay back rookie!
Whoa!
SHOVE
I said get out of my way!


GSSSSHHHHH
Whoa!
Whoa!
Whoa!
FUJITA
9
GSSHHH
Bas-tard!
Don't blame me. I learned that trick from Sunai.
Ha ha ha ha!
SCREET
SCREET
No. 3 Sunai takes advantage and moves past No. 16 Watanabe into second!
No. 9 Fujita is off the course, taken out of the scramble for second place!
SUNAI
16

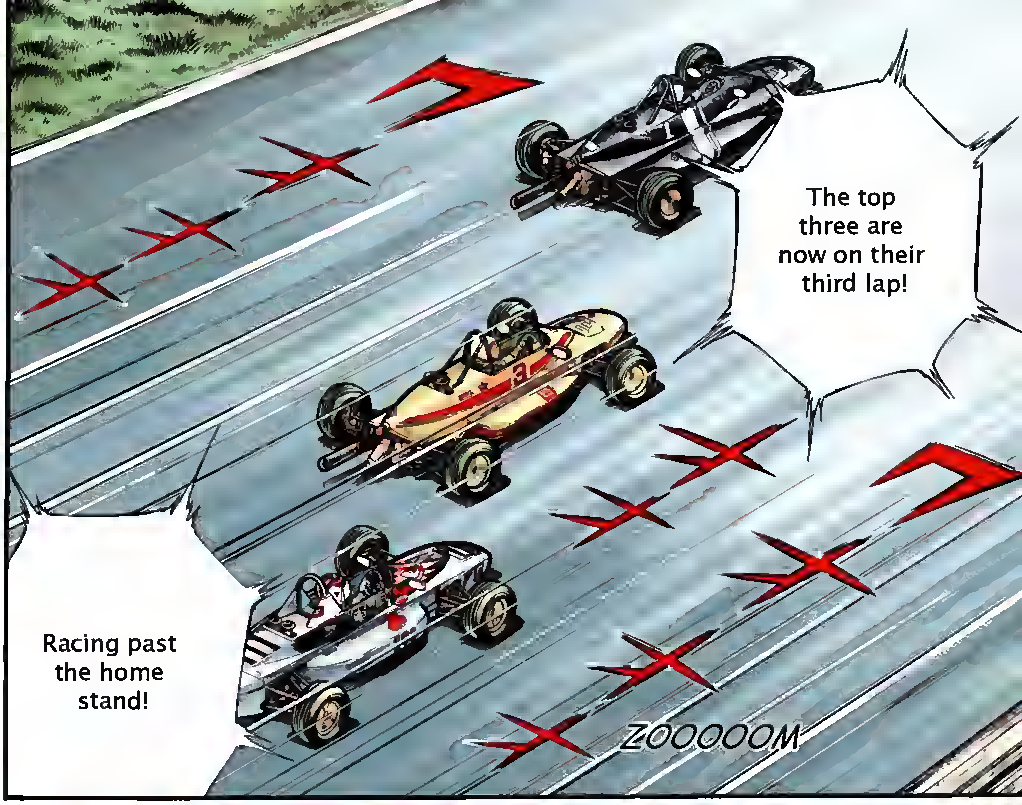

SHOO SHOO
ちゃっ
Move aside!
Not a chance, jerk!
NABE
KRRR
You asked for it.
No. 101 Akagi has passed through the first hairpin, ending up head-to-head with No. 16 Watanabe for third!
BRAAAAH
ZOOOM
BAM
WOBBLE
I asked nicely.
What the hell are you...!?
16

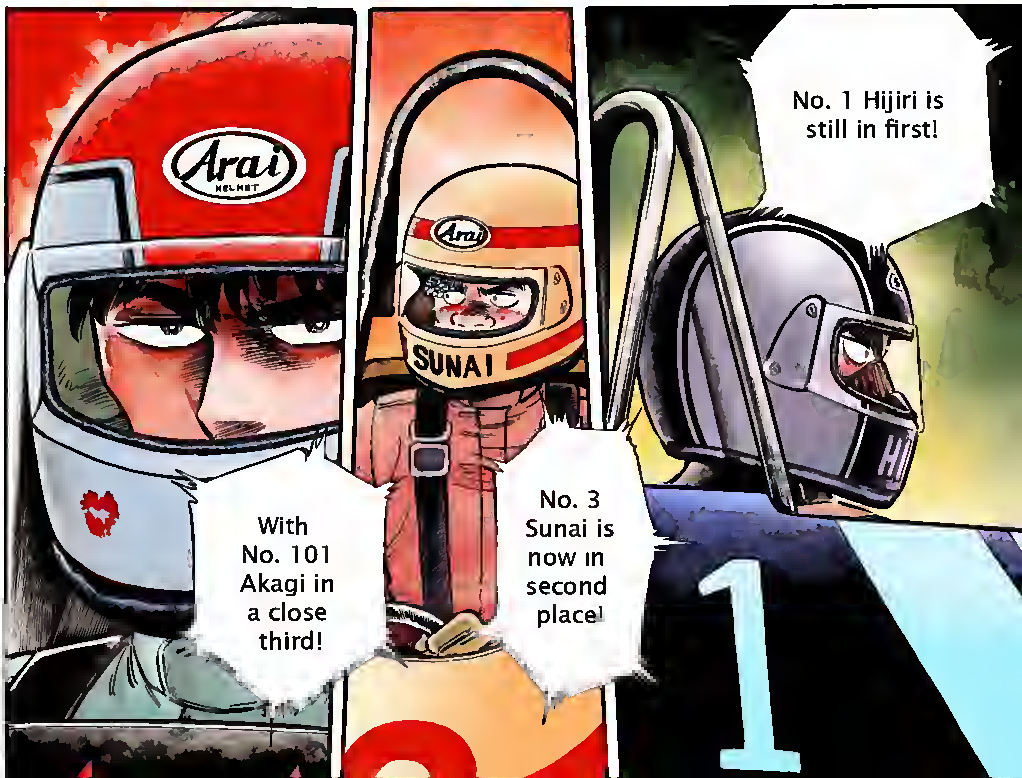

Gyah!
Guard rail!
You sunuva!
See ya!
KRRR
IRRK
Whooaa!
SCREEEETCH!
No. 16 hits the brakes and goes into a skid!
Akagi passes him brilliantly!
SCREET

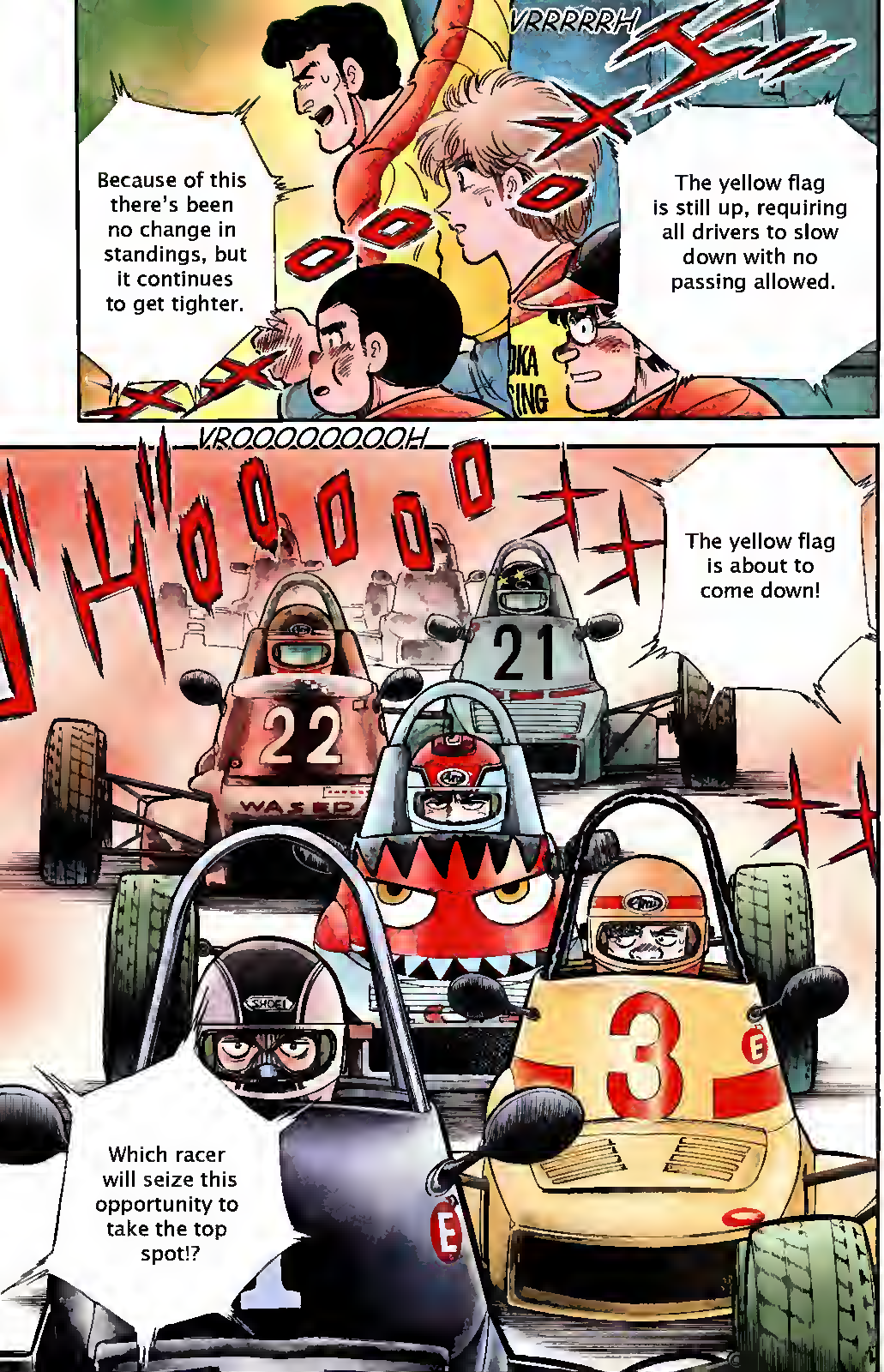
PLUNK
Who-aaa!
But No. 8 Tamura who was right on his tail plunges in!
POSHH
IRK
IRK
IRK
IRRRRK
There's been a crash! There's been a crash!
Check

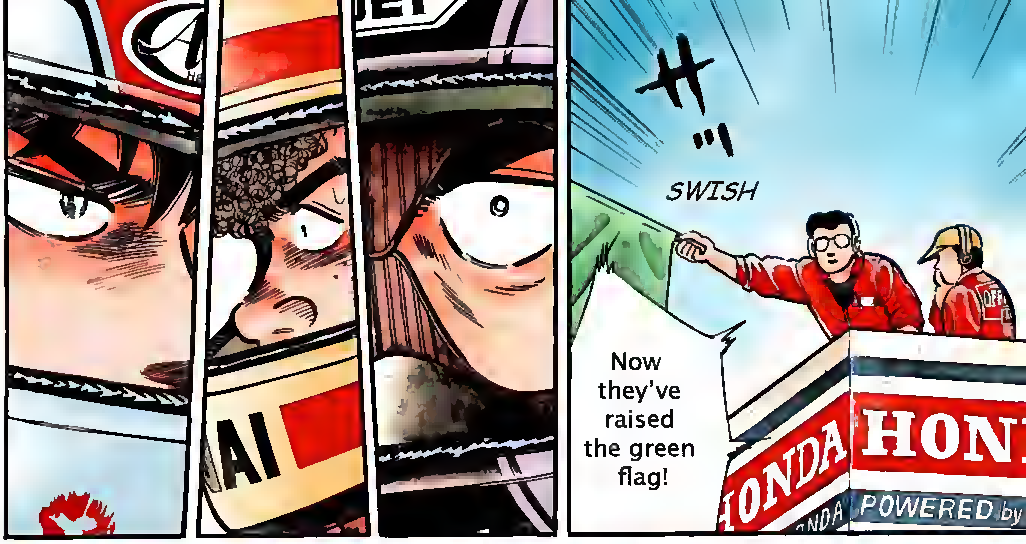
We're only on lap 3 and things are getting out of hand, folks!
Gunma Akagi, who recorded unbelievable times in the preliminary race, seems to have triggered this mess!
Cars scrambling for the second spot are running into all sorts of trouble!
This has been a very intense race from the beginning!
Which indicates to slow down, and that no passing is allowed!
They're waving a yellow flag now!
SUNAI
Cars in first, second, and third place are getting much closer to each other!
It's getting tight, folks!
Arai
MORIOKA RACING
GUNMA

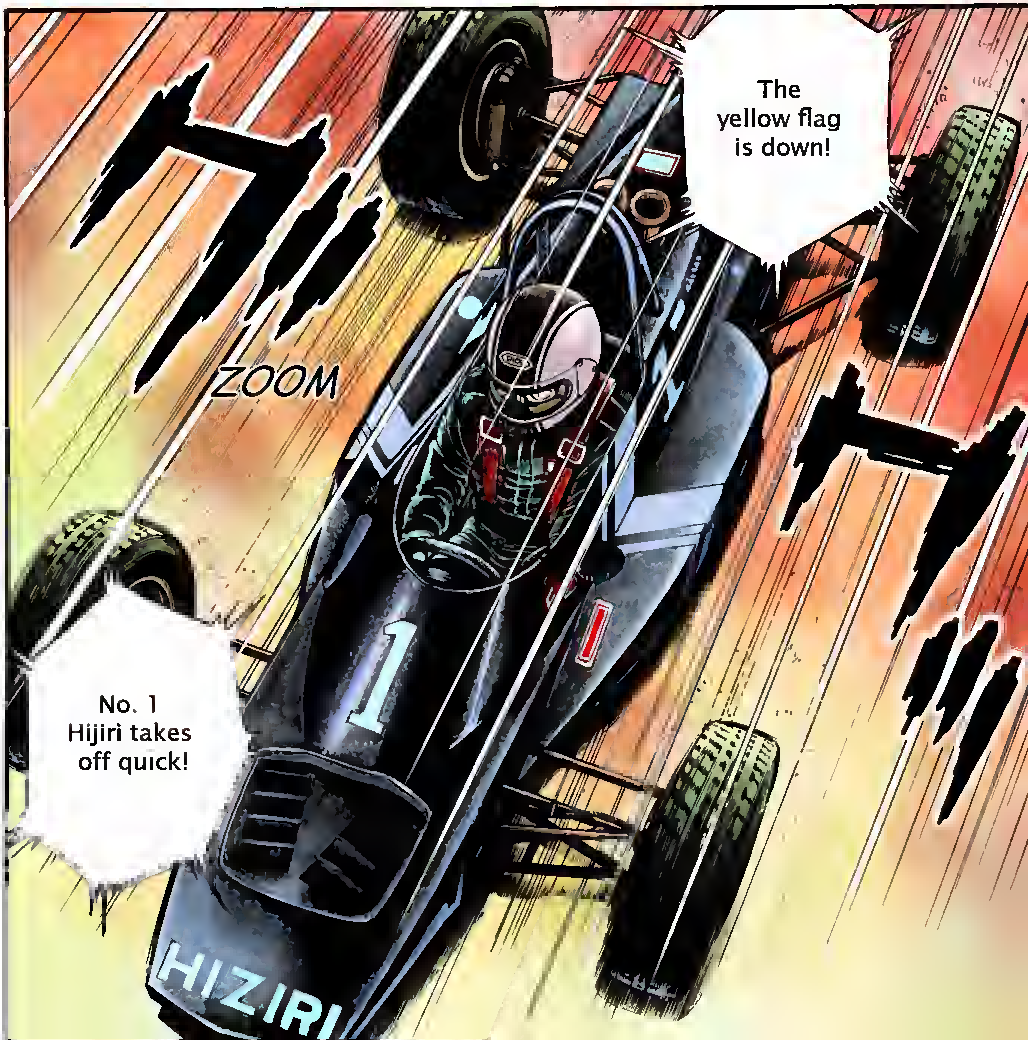
Chapter 10: The Final Lap


The top three are now on their third lap!
Racing past the home stand!
ZOOOOOM


Arai
HELMET
SUNAI
No. 1 Hijiri is still in first!
With No. 101 Akagi in a close third!
No. 3 Sunai is now in second place!
1

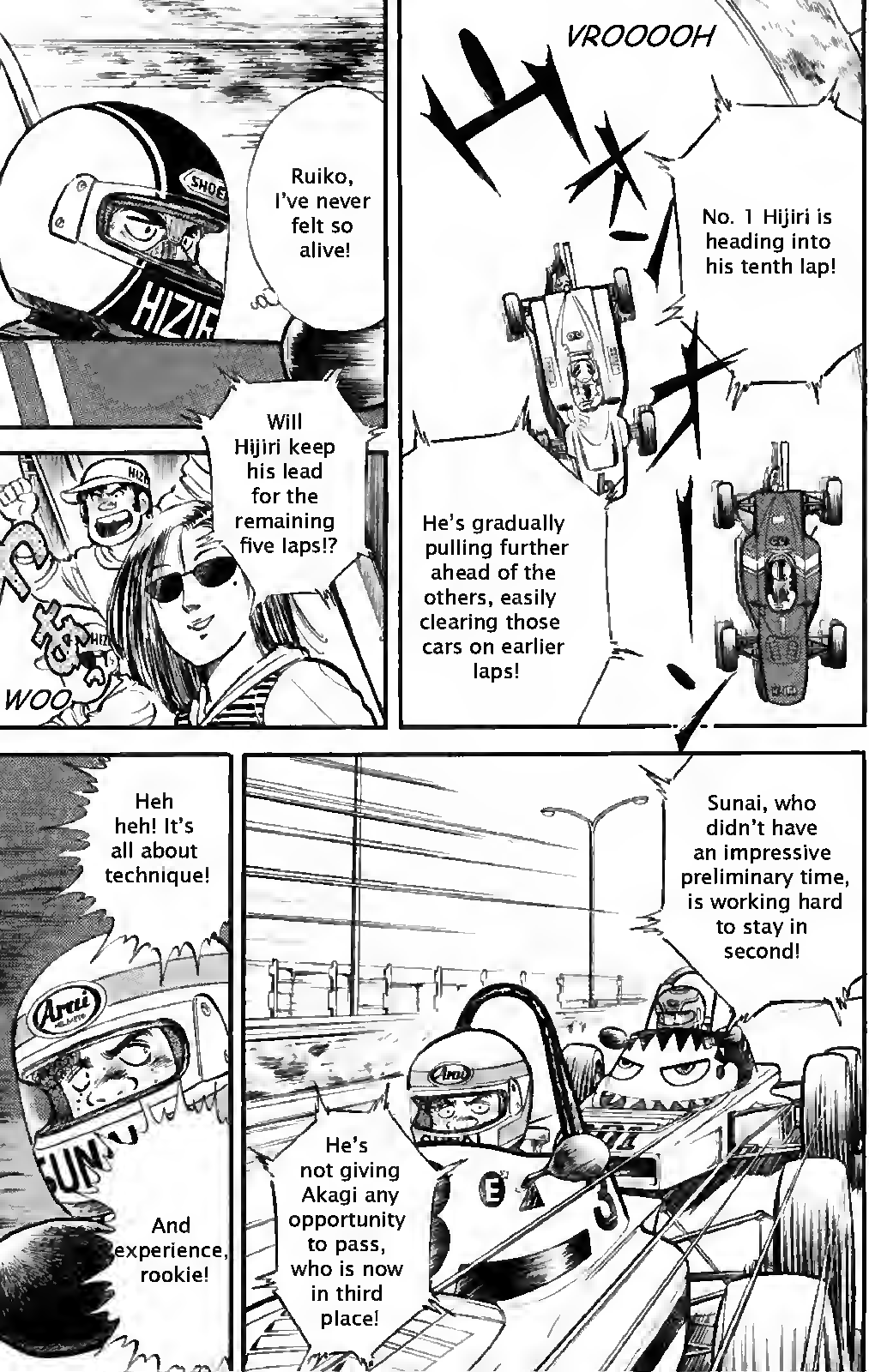

VRRRRRH
Because of this there's been no change in standings, but it continues to get tighter.
The yellow flag is still up, requiring all drivers to slow down with no passing allowed.
VROOOOOOOOH
The yellow flag is about to come down!
Which racer will seize this opportunity to take the top spot!?

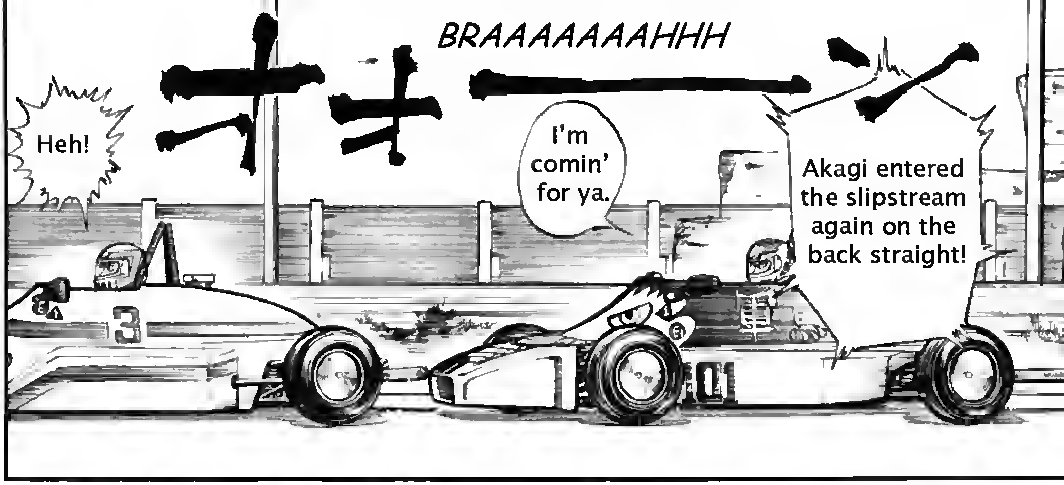

SWISH
Now they've raised the green flag!
HONDA
POWERED by

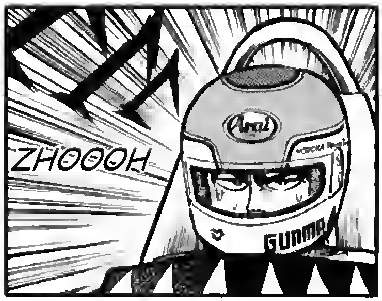

The yellow flag is down!
ZOOM
No. 1 Hijiri takes off quick!
1
HIZIRI

VRRRR
RRRRR
The course is once again filled with a thunderous roar!
ZOOOOHHH
Sunai and Akagi are fighting for second!
No change in position yet!
SHOOOOOM
You know what...
...
GUNMA AKAGI
I'm a little impres-sed.
Don't you think?
...he's really doing well!
ZOOOM

That is pretty crazy.
But not as crazy as him.
MUMBLE MUMBLE
He had those great times in the preliminary race...
...and now he's holding on to third place.
ORIOKA RACING
Something might happen before they cross the finish line.
I wouldn't be too impressed just yet.
Some of the cars on earlier laps complicate things too.
This is where it starts to get tough.
Things can change in a heartbeat!
That's right!
GUNMA AKAGI
Don't overdo it.
Don't overdo it.
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
I guess so.

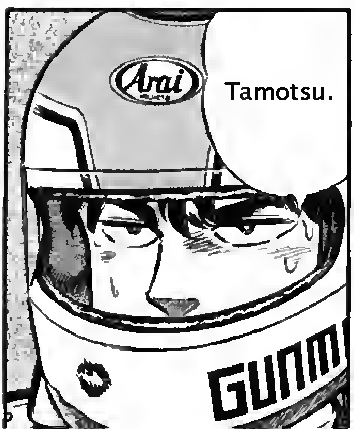

Ruiko, I've never felt so alive!
Will Hijiri keep his lead for the remaining five laps!?
WOO
VROOOOH
No. 1 Hijiri is heading into his tenth lap!
He's gradually pulling further ahead of the others, easily clearing those cars on earlier laps!
Heh heh! It's all about technique!
And experience, rookie!
He's not giving Akagi any opportunity to pass, who is now in third place!
Sunai, who didn't have an impressive preliminary time, is working hard to stay in second!

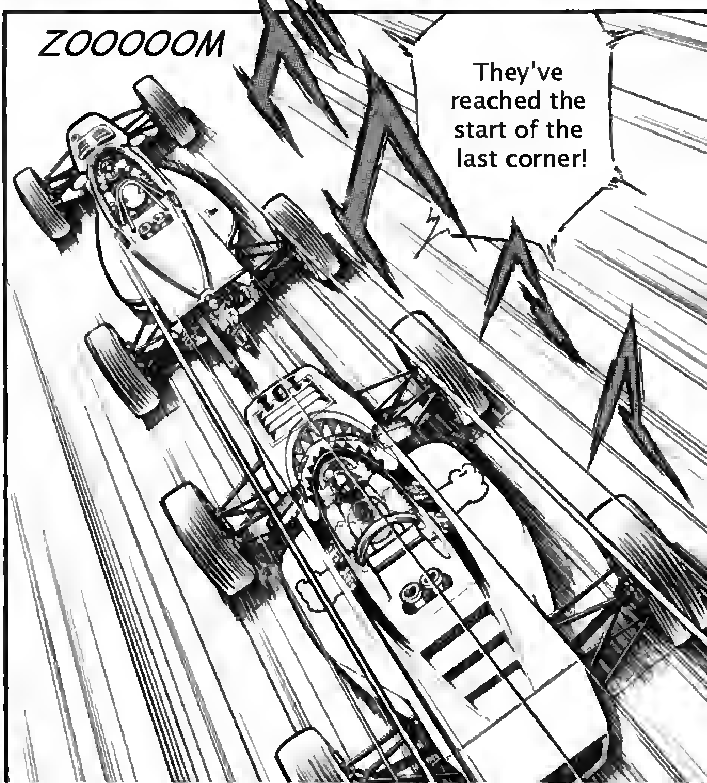

BRAAAAAAAHHH
Heh!
I'm comin' for ya.
Akagi entered the slipstream again on the back straight!


ZHOOOH

A third place finish is more than enough!
Stop it, Gunma. Don't overdo it.
MUMBLE
MUMBLE

Please, please, please.


Tamotsu.

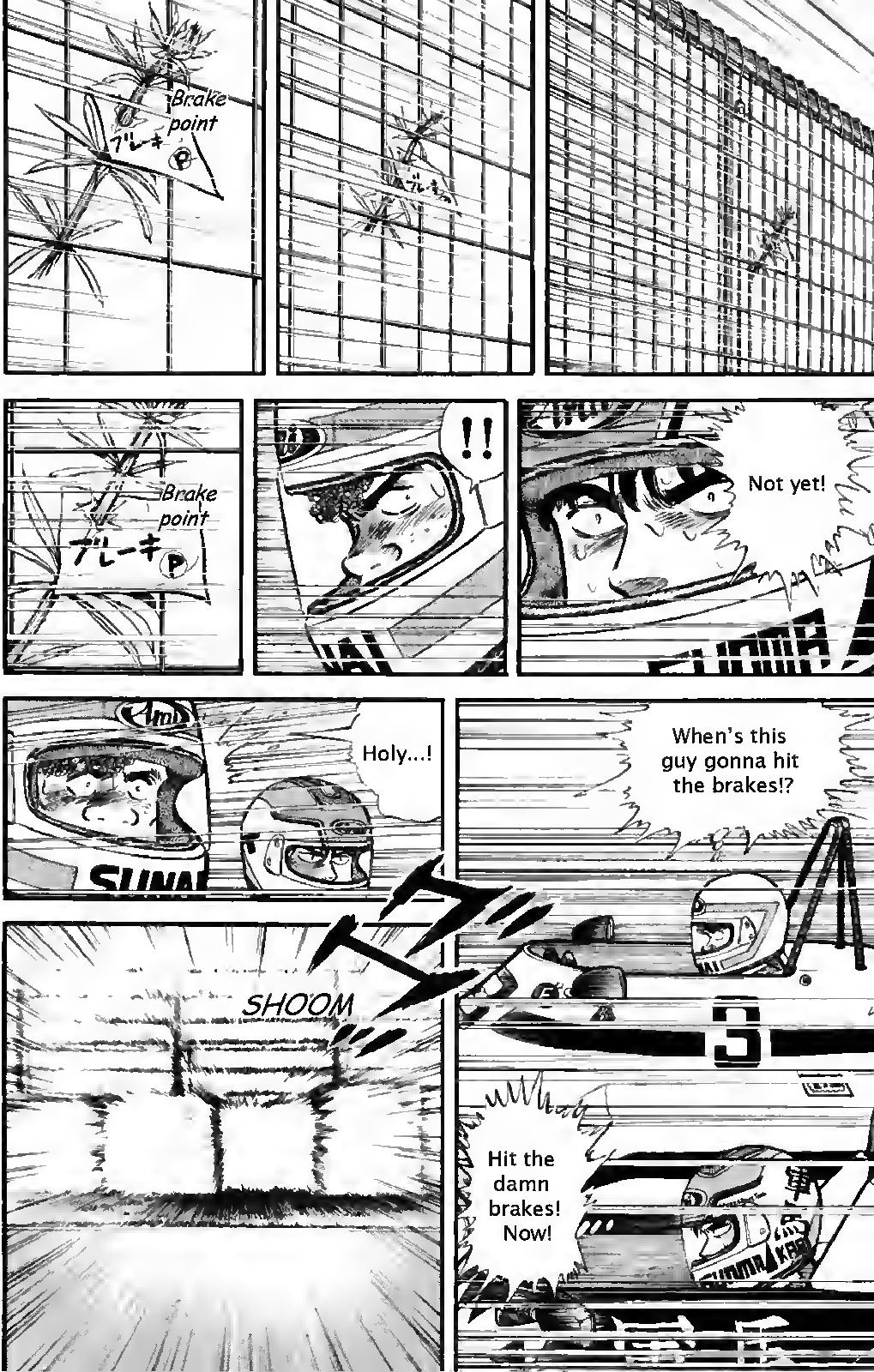

ZOOOOOM
They've reached the start of the last corner!

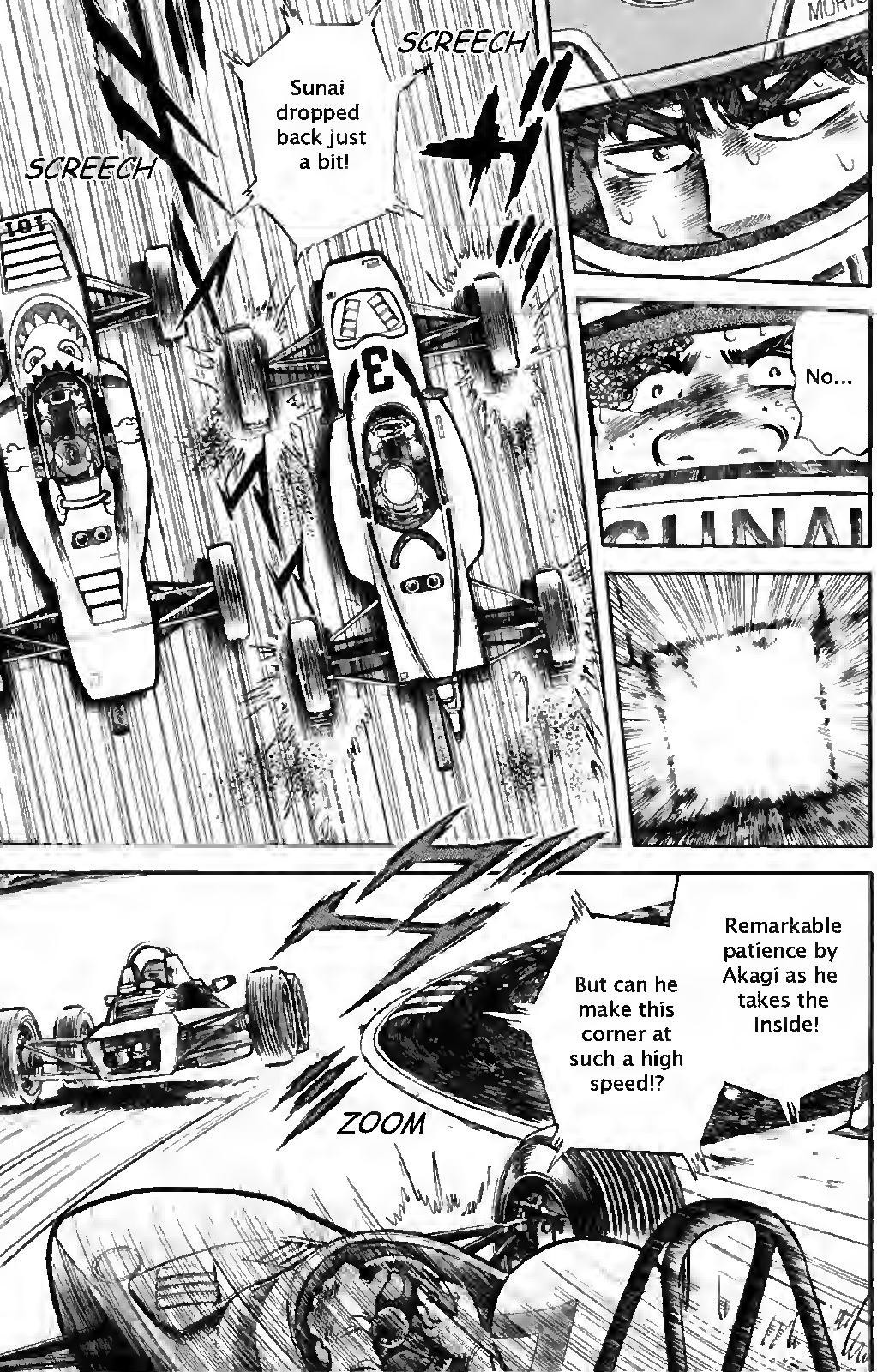
...I'll never get past Sunai!
If I follow that braking point you drew on the chart ...
VROOOOOOH
Akagi has left the slipstream and moved to the outside, neck-and-neck with Sunai!
Whoever brakes first will lose the inside! It's a battle of wills, folks!
Which one of them will take the inside of the last corner!?
Heh! Nothing you try is gonna work!
Gotta hit the brakes three meters past the braking point!

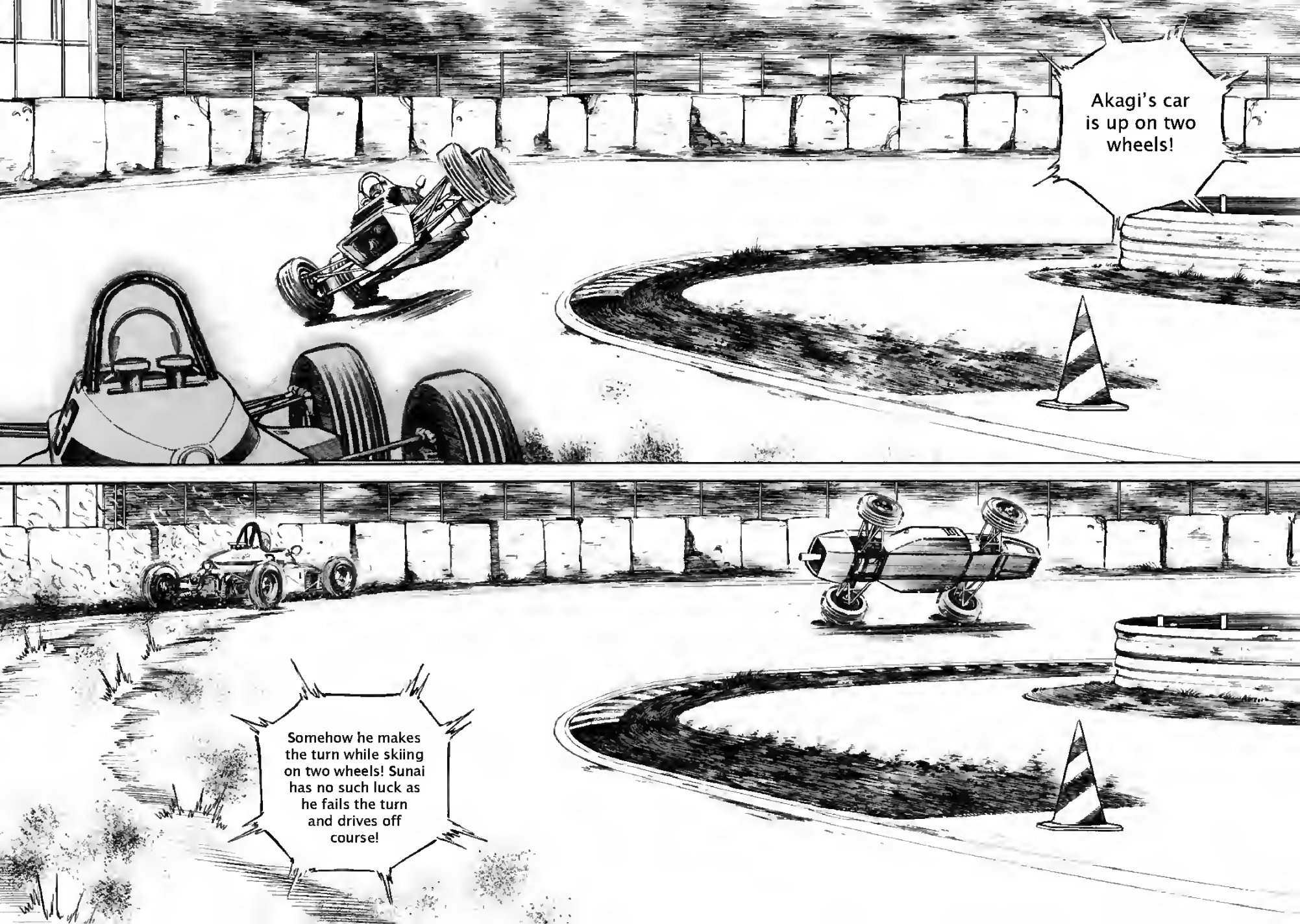
SHOOOOOOOOOM
Sunai's gonna hit the brakes first! I know it!
13

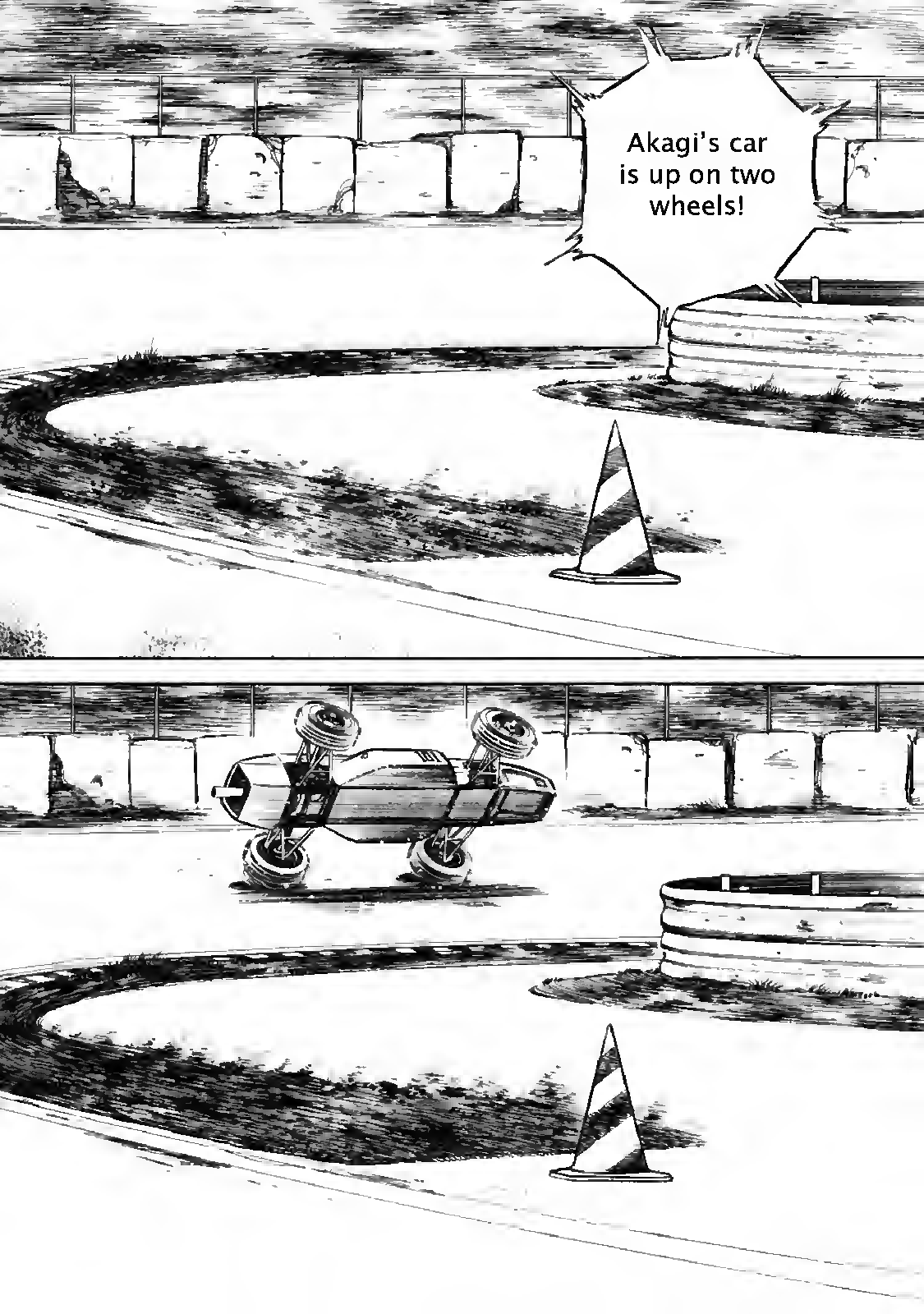
SHOOOOOOOOOM
13

Sunai's gonna hit the brakes first! I know it!


Brake point
ブレーキ
Brake point
ブレーキ
!!
Not yet!
Holy...!
When's this guy gonna hit the brakes!?
SHOOM
Hit the damn brakes! Now!


SCREECH
Sunai dropped back just a bit!
SCREECH
No...
But can he make this corner at such a high speed!?
Remarkable patience by Akagi as he takes the inside!
ZOOM


Akagi's car is up on two wheels!
Somehow he makes the turn while skiing on two wheels! Sunai has no such luck as he fails the turn and drives off course!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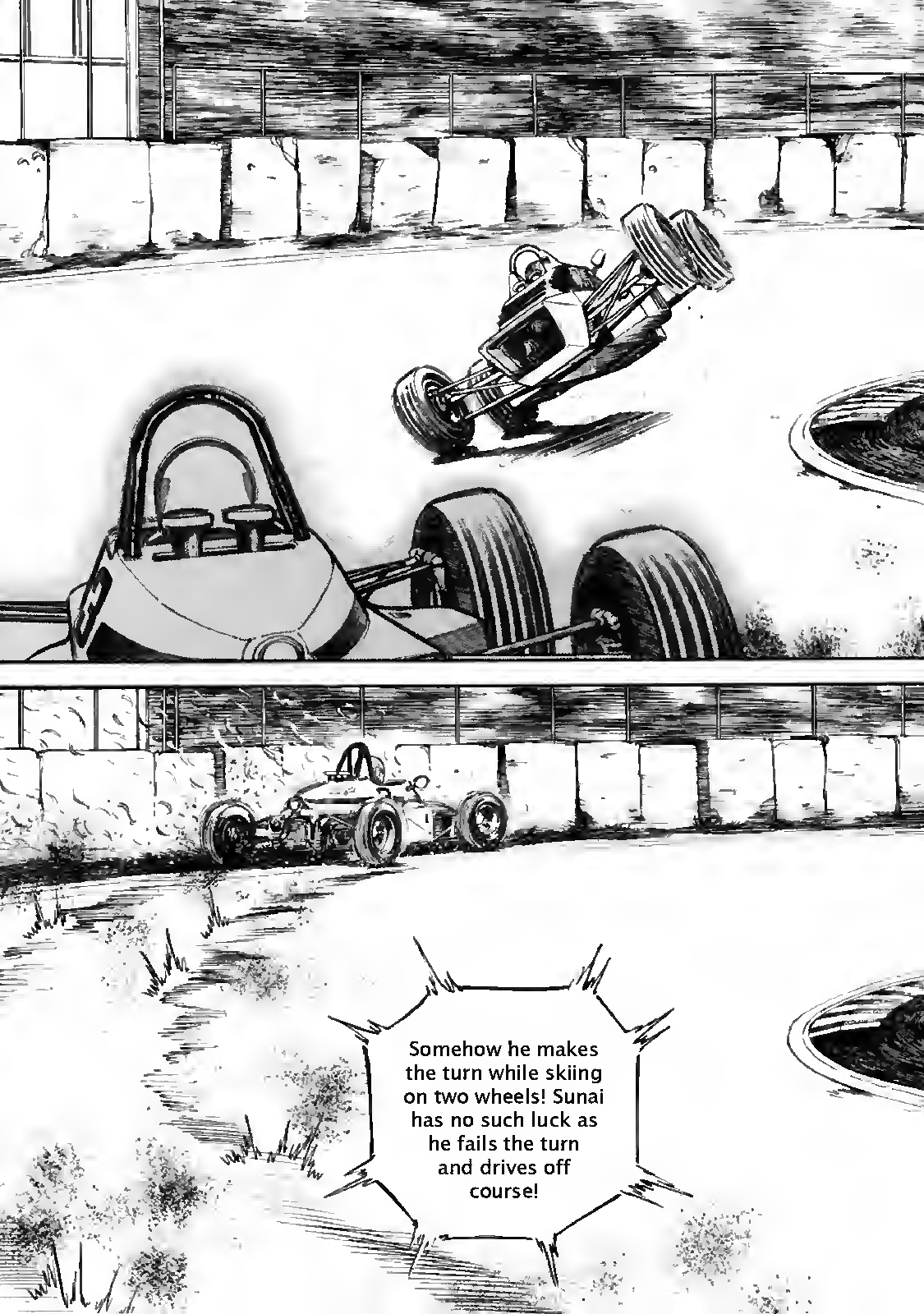
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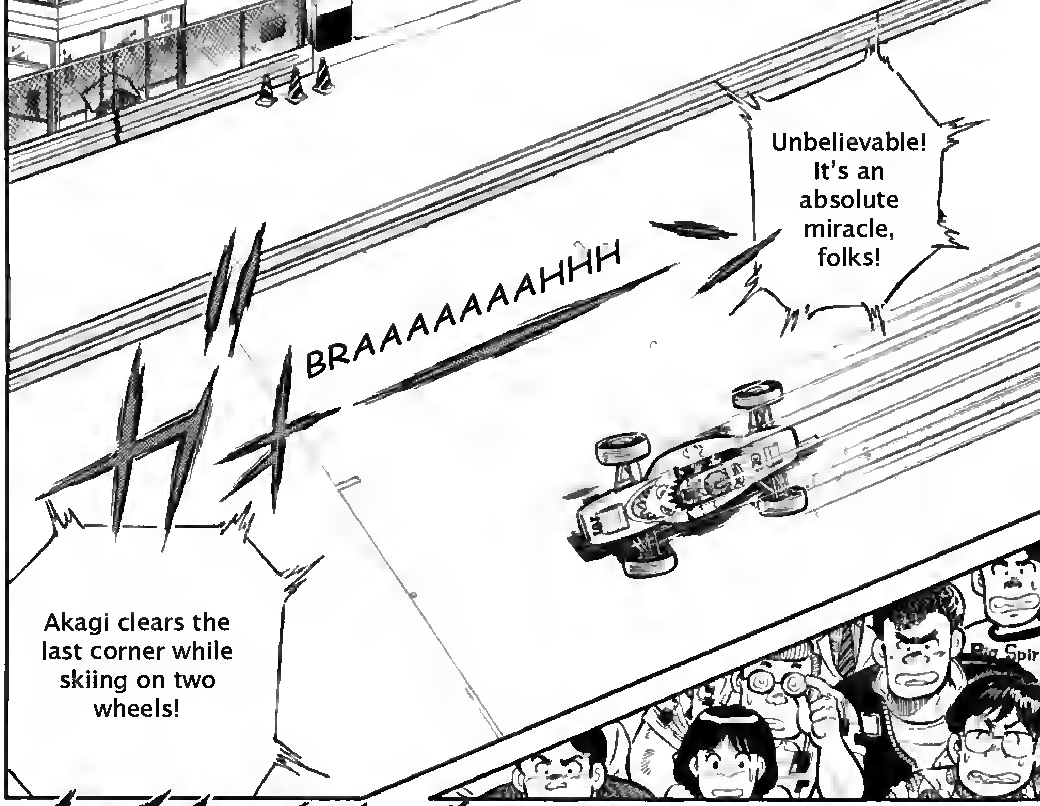
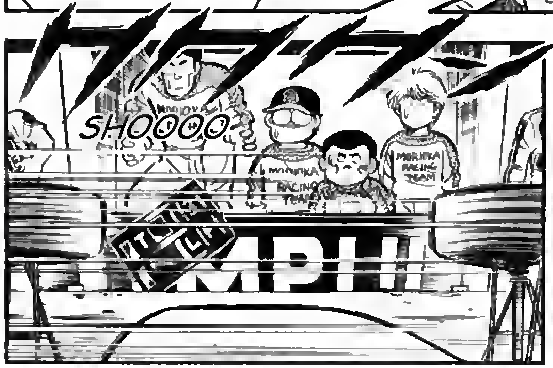
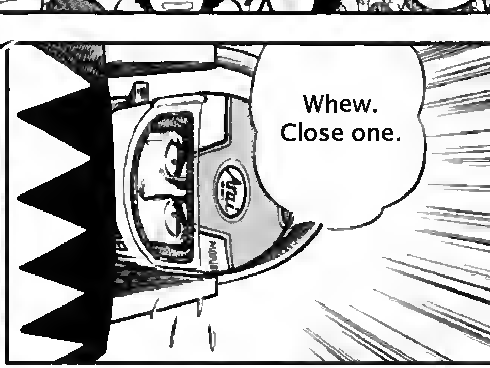
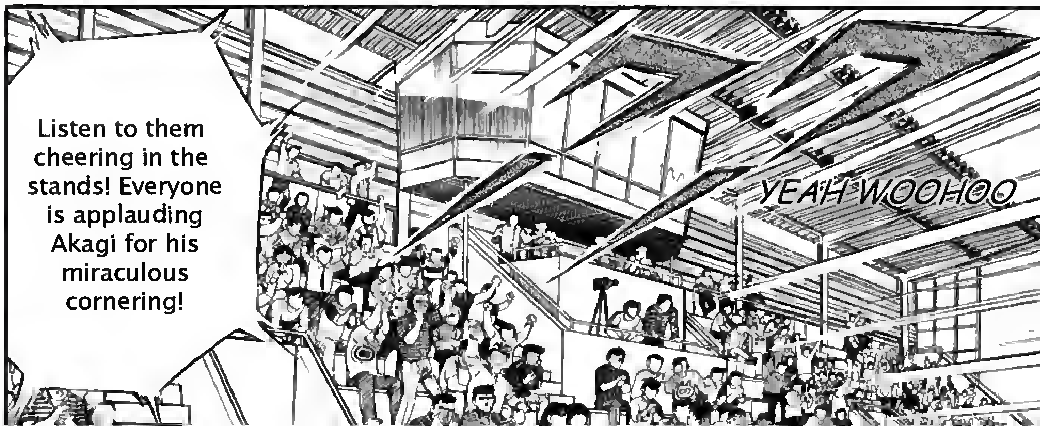
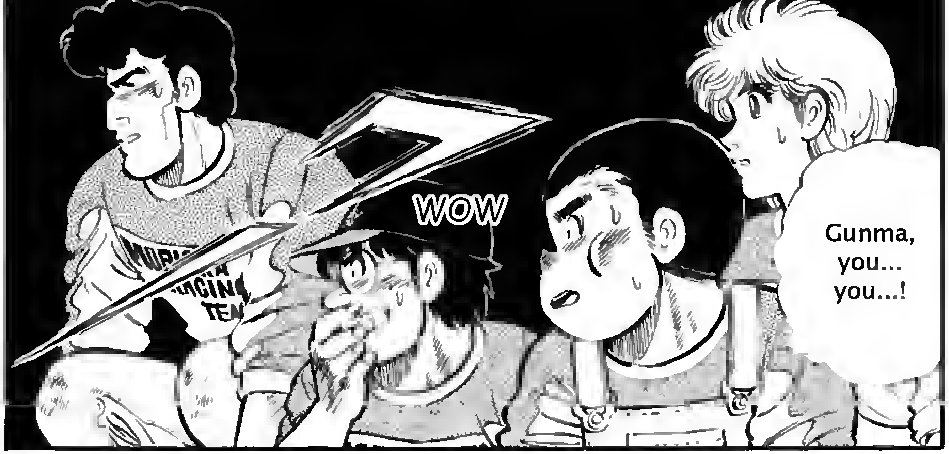
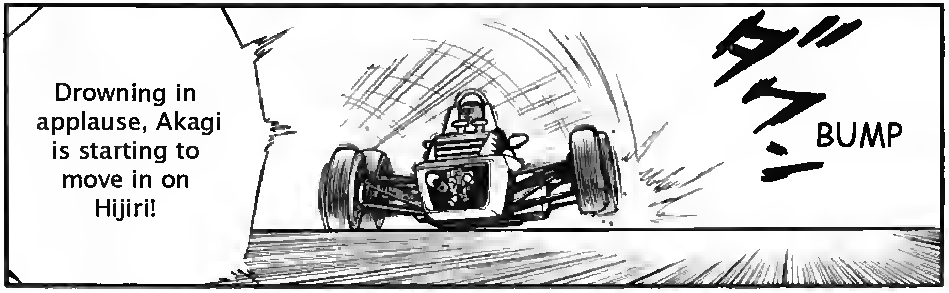

BRAAAAAAAHHH
Unbelievable! It's an absolute miracle, folks!
Akagi clears the last corner while skiing on two wheels!

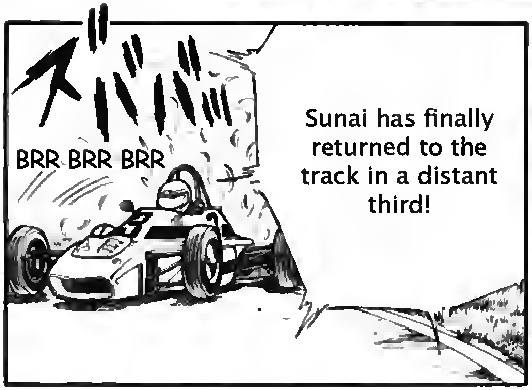

SHOOOO
MPH

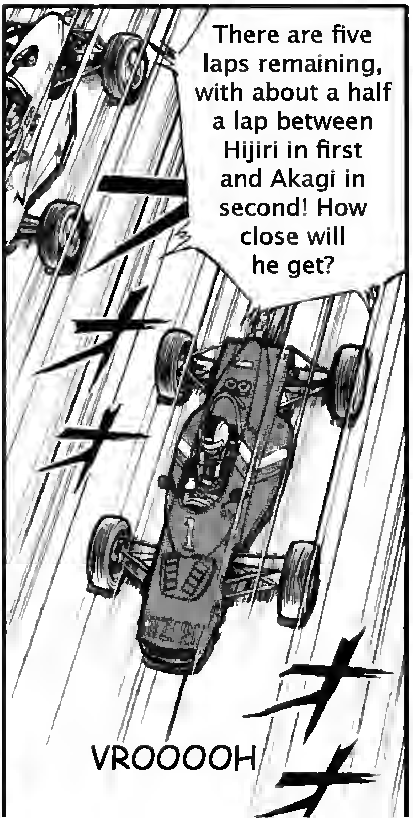

Whew. Close one.

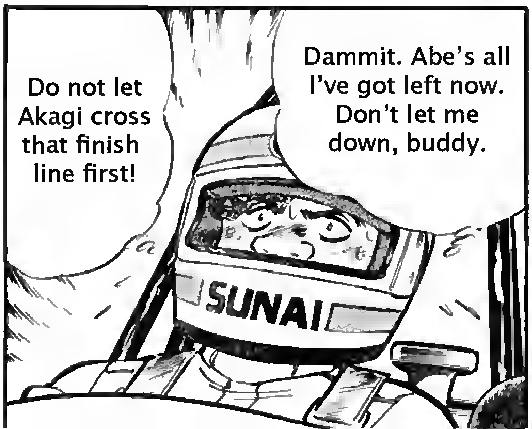

Listen to them cheering in the stands! Everyone is applauding Akagi for his miraculous cornering!
YEAH WOOHOO


WOW
Gunma, you... you...!

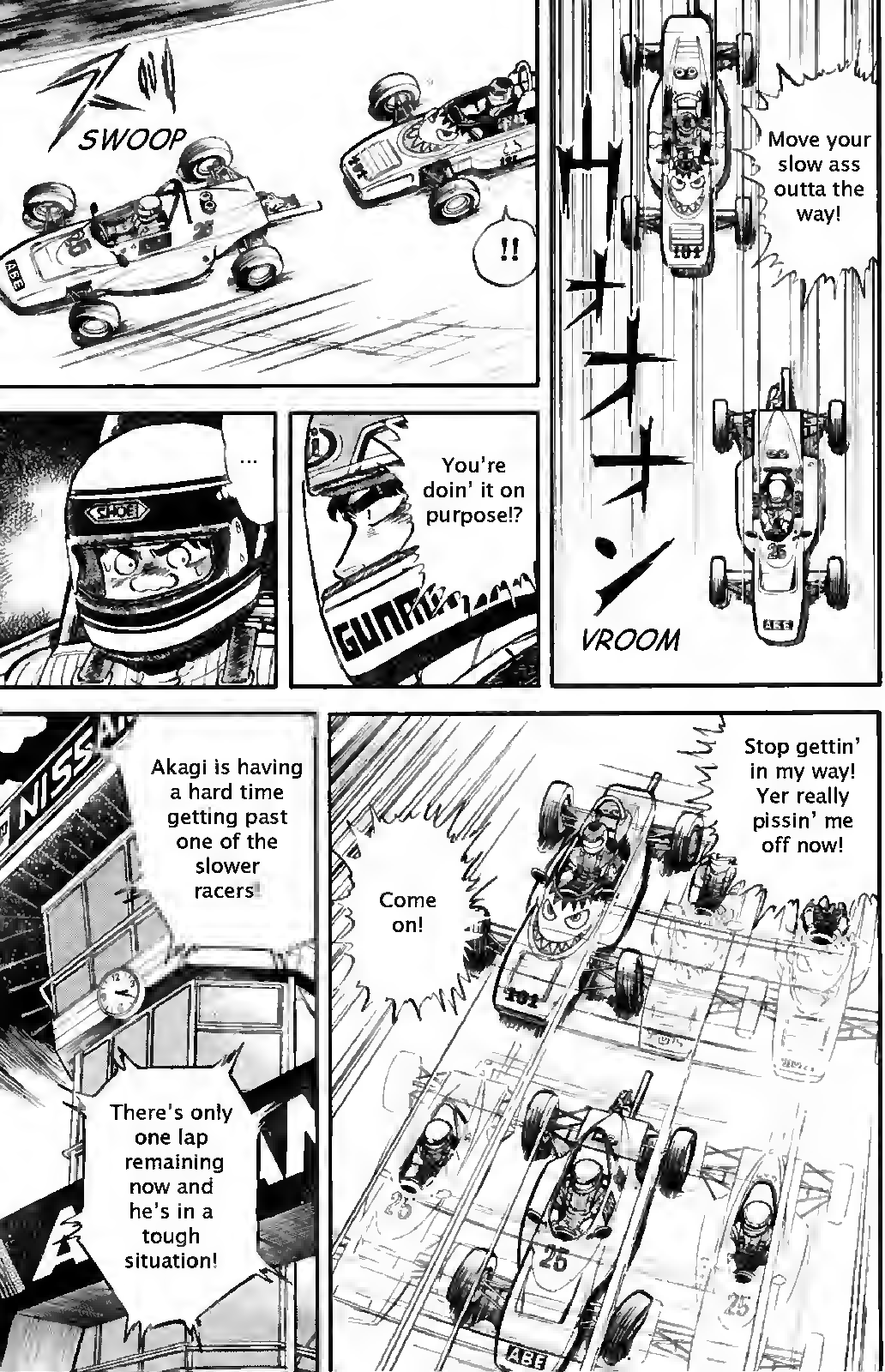

Drowning in applause, Akagi is starting to move in on Hijiri!
BUMP

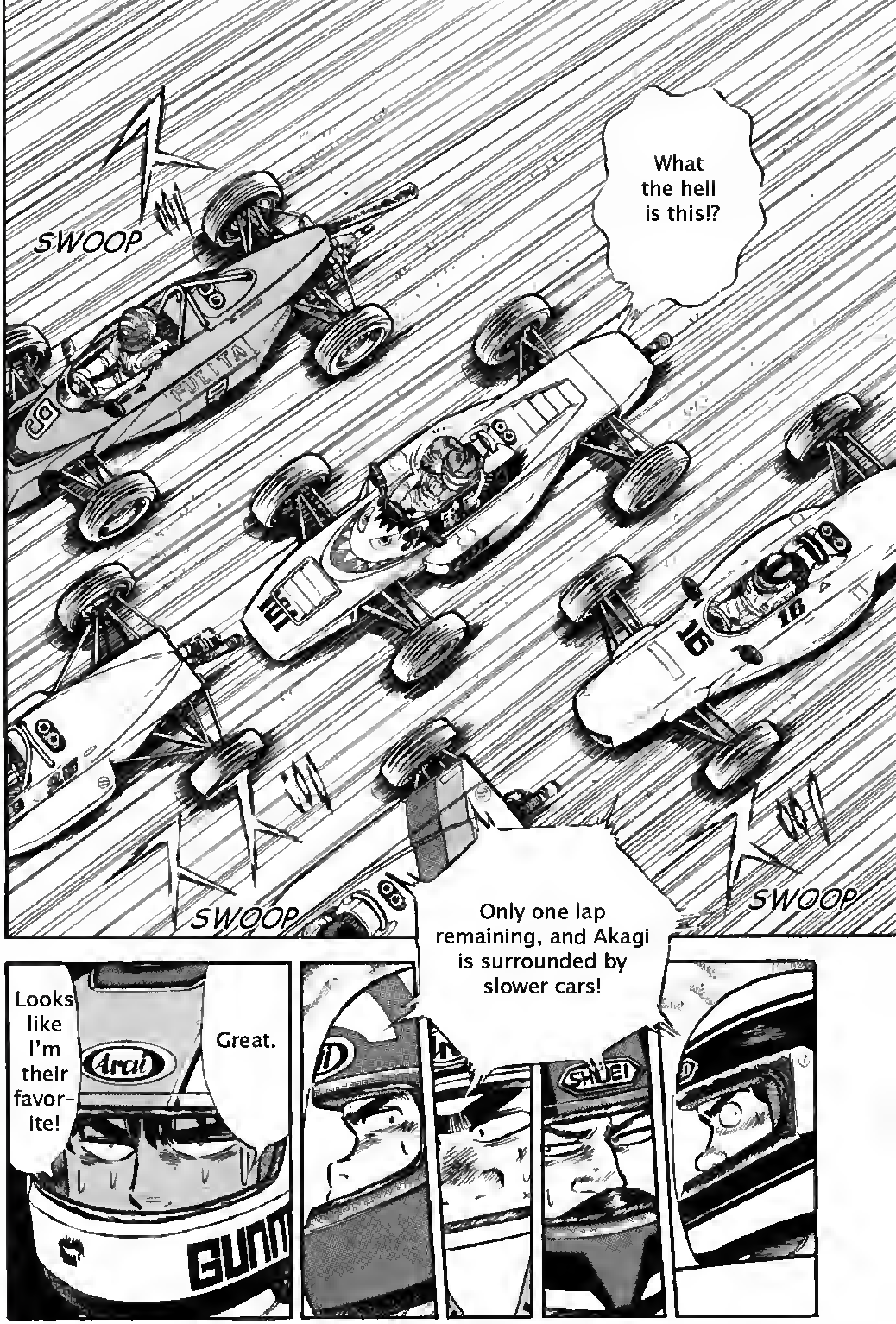

BRR BRR BRR
Sunai has finally returned to the track in a distant third!


There are five laps remaining, with about a half a lap between Hijiri in first and Akagi in second! How close will he get?
VROOOOH


Do not let Akagi cross that finish line first!
Dammit. Abe's all I've got left now. Don't let me down, buddy.
SUNAI

Where the hell are you, Hijiri?
Only three laps left.
Hey!
Man, how far ahead could he be?
...
阿部
Oh. Just a guy gettin' lapped.
阿部
...
Do me this favor, and I'll cancel your debt, Abe. Since you're usually a lap or so behind, make it tough for Akagi!


SWOOP
!!
Move your slow ass outta the way!
VROOM
...
You're doin' it on purpose!?
Akagi is having a hard time getting past one of the slower racers
There's only one lap remaining now and he's in a tough situation!
Come on!
Stop gettin' in my way! Yer really pissin' me off now!



"F" Volume 3 THE END

F VOL.3

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